

## CHAPTER 11: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### 11.1 Process Description

Public participation is recognized as an integral part of the planning process. The North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NCTCOG) Public Participation Plan, approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) on June 1, 1994, and amended on March 12, 2020, outlines a proactive process for an open exchange of information and ideas between the public and transportation decision makers. The public participation process for Transportation Conformity and other transportation plans, projects, and policies includes timely public notice, full public access to technical and policy information, opportunities for early and continuing involvement, and explicit consideration and response to public input.

Public participation strategies and procedures are designed to inform the public on transportation and air quality issues, provide opportunities to involve the public in the decision-making process, and seek public and stakeholder input. Additionally, this process builds support among the public who are stakeholders in transportation investments. Public views and opinions are included in the final Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) documents and conformity analysis of these documents. The NCTCOG Public Participation Plan directly addresses United States Code, Title 23 requirements, and involvement efforts are shaped through the following components:

<b>Inform and Educate</b>	<i>Make information relevant, accessible, and understandable to the public</i>
<b>Engage and Encourage</b>	<i>Provide a variety of opportunities, both traditional and innovative, for a diverse public to submit input and comments</i>
<b>Evaluate</b>	<i>Review and document outreach and communications efforts so transportation decision making reflects public input</i>

Public meetings are one component of the NCTCOG Public Participation Plan. Public meetings were held prior to seeking RTC approval of the 2023 conformity results. Hybrid public meetings provided an opportunity for transportation stakeholders and the general public to submit oral or written comments on transportation and air quality issues and planning activities. Information about air quality conformity was presented at the hybrid public meeting held in October 2023. Additionally, a video recording of each meeting was posted online so people could watch the presentation and discussion at a time and place convenient for them. A minimum 30-day comment period was scheduled for the public to respond after the public meetings. The final public comment period prior to seeking RTC policy body action started on October 9, 2023, and ended on November 7, 2023. Public meetings were also advertised in English and Spanish newspapers and on department social media channels, including Facebook. Other communication strategies used to announce public meetings are outlined in the Public Participation Plan. A summary of all public comments, oral and written, as provided to the RTC and appropriate committees (if any), are included in Appendix 12.20. Exhibits 11.1-1 and 11.1-2 provide an outline of the

public participation activities and schedule for this 2023 conformity analysis. Public participation activities for the MTP are outlined in that document.

The public participation process incorporates environmental justice elements and Title VI considerations. These populations are sought out for input, and their needs are considered. Title VI Complaint Procedures and a Language Assistance Plan are included as attachments to the Public Participation Plan. Through the Language Assistance Plan, NCTCOG seeks to ensure that all residents have access to provide input on transportation decisions regardless of their ability to read, write, or understand English. The Transportation Department makes every effort to accommodate language translation requests, if provided sufficient notice. Public participation efforts complement the use of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds in the entire 10-county nonattainment area in which the funds can be used to implement projects and programs that reduce pollution from mobile sources. Air quality monitors located throughout the region enable analysis of pollutant levels in all communities. This helps ensure that no particular community is subjected to particularly unhealthy air. These steps are examples of efforts made to ensure healthy air for all citizens of North Central Texas.

**Exhibit 11.1-1: Public Involvement/Consultation for 2023 Transportation Conformity**

Information/Action Items							
Activity	2023/2024						
	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024
<b>NCTCOG Executive Board</b>						A	
<b>Regional Transportation Council</b>			I	A			
<b>Surface Transportation Technical Committee</b>		I	A				
Public Involvement							
<b>Press Release for Public Meetings</b>			X				
<b>Public Meetings</b>			1				

A - Action agenda item

I - Information agenda item

# - Number of technical workshops, media briefings, public meetings, and workshops held

**Exhibit 11.1-2: 2023 Transportation Conformity Timeline**

