

Public Involvement Policy



Adopted by Resolution 4-94, March 21, 1994
Updated November 16, 1998
Updated June 19, 2000
Updated November 17, 2003
Updated October 16, 2006
Updated December 21, 2009
Updated October 15, 2012

POLICY: The planning processes of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) shall include an active public involvement process that provides comprehensive information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans.

COMPASS staff will tailor specific public involvement plans for individual projects and/or programs, as indicated in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The individual public involvement plans will be subject to approval by the COMPASS Board, following review and recommendation by the COMPASS Public Participation Committee. Additional stakeholder groups, committees, and/or individuals may also be asked to review, comment on, or provide input to public involvement plans, as appropriate. COMPASS' public involvement activities will also be coordinated with those of other transportation and related agencies as warranted.

These plans and processes will comply with or exceed all federal and state laws, rules, and regulations regarding public involvement and the solicitation of public input.

COMPASS will consider and implement the principles of equality for all citizens as formulated in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all related regulations and directives, the Executive Order for Environmental Justice, Presidential Executive Order 13166—Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, and the Americans with Disabilities Act to the extent reasonably possible. COMPASS provides self-certification of this annually. The COMPASS Title VI plan and related documents can be found at www.compassidaho.org/people/publicinvolvement.htm.

COMPASS will gather and analyze available community demographics and use this information, as appropriate, when developing individual public involvement plans and activities in order to best serve all affected communities, including traditionally under-represented populations such as ethnic/racial minorities, low income individuals, and individuals with disabilities. COMPASS is committed to reaching out to these groups in manners appropriate and convenient for them (e.g., approaching groups where they normally congregate, translating materials as appropriate, assisting with transportation or child care as needed, etc.).

METHODS: Methods used to engage the public in implementing public involvement plans may include, without limitation:

Two-Way Communication and Information Techniques

- Public meetings
- Focus groups
- Briefings
- Surveys
- Meetings with member agency/COMPASS technical and advisory committees
- Ad hoc committees and task forces
- Public hearings conducted by member agencies prior to Board adoption, as appropriate and as requested
- Presentations
- Community visioning workshops
- Information hot line
- Technical assistance
- Expert panels
- Field trips
- Electronic communications (websites, online surveys, blogs, webinars, email, social media, etc.)
- Coordination with other agencies and organizations

One-Way Communication and Information Techniques

- Printed materials (fact sheets, newsletters, brochures, issue papers)
- Information repositories (libraries, member agencies, schools)
- Advertisements
- Newspaper inserts
- News releases
- Electronic communications
- News conferences
- General media (television, radio)

Visualization and Interactive Techniques (encouraged)

- Maps
- Charts and graphs
- Photos and drawings
- Games
- Videos
- Computer-generated images, animation, and simulation

Comprehensive Information

- Meeting dates/sites/agendas for COMPASS meetings posted on web site
- COMPASS Board and standing committee meetings open to the public
- Convenient and accessible meeting locations and times
- Materials supplied in additional/alternative languages and formats, as appropriate and/or requested
- Assistance provided to aid people in attending meetings or acquiring information, as requested (e.g., assistance in transportation to/from a meeting)
- Major documents available on website
- Presentations to organizations identified as stakeholders
- Planning fairs and other joint public meetings held with similar agencies

Early Citizen Input

- Identification of initial planning issues using citizen input
- Comment periods that allow adequate time for involvement/input

Timely Public Notice

- Legal notices
- Media contacts, news releases, and public service announcements
- Paid advertisements
- Website, email distribution, social media
- Direct mail/postcards

Full Public Access to Key Decisions

- Publication of meeting dates/sites
- Availability of draft documents and informational materials
- Open house meetings or other formats to discuss projects/plans

Continuing Involvement and Feedback

- Stakeholder list of interested groups, businesses, neighborhoods, elected officials, agency staffs, citizens, and under-represented communities
- Ongoing involvement from the COMPASS Public Participation Committee
- Comment periods that allow adequate time for involvement/input
- Summary transcripts of public comments to elected officials prior to their decisions
- Citizen comments, staff recommendations, and Board decisions distributed via news releases, website postings, emails, newsletters, or other means as appropriate
- Use of electronic media and emerging technologies

COMMENT AND NOTICE PERIODS: COMPASS requires that each formal public involvement process have a defined minimum public comment period as specified below¹. The public will be notified of each public comment period as/before the comment period begins through one or more of the means outlined in "Timely Public Notice," above.

- 1) Transportation Improvement Program (Updated every one or two years)
 - Update public comment period – 30 days
 - Amendment public comment period – 15 days
- 2) Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan (Updated every four years)
 - Update public comment period – 30 days
 - Amendment public comment period – 15 days
- 3) Air Quality Conformity Demonstration (conducted in conjunction with updates/amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program and regional long-range transportation plan)
 - Concurrent with Transportation Improvement Program or regional long-range transportation plan update – 30 days
 - Concurrent with Transportation Improvement Program or regional long-range transportation plan amendment – 15 days
- 4) [General] Public Hearing
 - Notice for hearing – 15 days prior
- 5) Public Involvement Policy Update (Updated every three years)
 - Public comment period – 45 days (per federal regulations, 23 CFR §450.316)

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¹ Public involvement/comment time periods may be extended or additional public involvement/comment periods may be added when significant changes to the initial draft are made or when significant concern or controversy arises from the draft.