

# Public Participation Plan

A STRATEGY FOR CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT



Albemarle Rural Planning Organization

*Adopted by the ARPO RTAC on January 23, 2019*

## Introduction

The Albemarle Rural Planning Organization (ARPO) believes an effective public involvement process promotes sound decision making by reflecting our regions values and priorities. The ARPO will actively seek comprehensive public input into our transportation planning process.

### PURPOSE

Effective public involvement is a key element in addressing Title VI in decision-making. This Public Participation Plan describes how the Albemarle Rural Planning Organization will disseminate vital agency information and engage the public. We will seek out and consider the input and needs of interested parties and groups traditionally underserved by transportation systems who may face challenges accessing our services, such as minority and limited English proficient (LEP) persons. Underlying these efforts is our commitment to determining the most effective outreach methods for a given project or population. The plan is intended to meet the following objectives:

- Create opportunities for the public to be well informed about the transportation planning process and the RPO;
- Provide the public with ample, appropriate and meaningful opportunities to engage in the transportation decision making process;
- Increase the transparency and visibility of Albemarle Rural Planning Organization (ARPO) activities; and
- Satisfy the requirements of NCGS 136-212 and federal transportation legislation.

The Plan is not intended to preempt any public involvement activities conducted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) or any local governments within the ARPO region.

## Public Participation

### OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

We will inform people of their rights under Title VI and related authorities with regard to our program. The primary means of achieving this will be posting and disseminating the policy statement and notice at RTCC and RTAC meetings. Information on Title VI will be disseminated to stakeholders, and the general public at their request. Public dissemination efforts may vary depending on factors present, but will generally include:

1. Posting public statements setting forth our nondiscrimination policy at all of our public meetings.

The ARPO will use the following strategies to educate stakeholders and keep the public informed about the transportation planning process:

### Notification of meetings

Notice of all regular and special meetings of the ARPO will be provided to ARPO members, media outlets and to members of the public upon request. The ARPO will post meeting dates, times, and locations on the ARPO website. Ads in newspapers and other publications shall include the following:

“The Albemarle Rural Planning Organization operates without regard to race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, sex, age or disability. For more information on our Title VI program, or how to file a discrimination complaint, please contact ( ARPO phone number) or (email of ARPO Director).”

### Website

The ARPO will maintain a website to provide members, transportation stakeholders and the public continual access to documents, publications, data and official ARPO records. The website is hosted by the Albemarle Commission. At a minimum, nondiscrimination information will be disseminated on our website and on posters in conspicuous areas at our office. Project-related information and our most current Title VI-related information will be maintained online.

### Press Releases and Media Alerts

The ARPO will periodically issue press releases detailing significant actions of the RPO; including: Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) meetings, Rural Technical Coordinating Committee (RTCC) meetings, adoptions of Comprehensive Transportation Plans, and adoption of project lists.

### Partnerships with Local Jurisdictions

The ARPO will work with local jurisdictions, within the ARPO region, to tailor presentations and materials to meet their specific local needs, and to capitalize on opportunities for sharing information.

### Posting Official Documents in Public Locations

All official ARPO documents will be provided to local jurisdictions, within the ARPO region at their request, for posting in governmental buildings and public libraries.

## Publications

The ARPO will provide transportation updates, at least twice per month, through email.

## Presentations to Civic Groups

The ARPO is available to speak to Civic groups regarding specific projects and/or the transportation planning process in general.

## IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

A stakeholder is any person or group who is affected by a transportation plan, program, or project. Stakeholder groups will be identified and will be included on an email list for notice of public hearings, workshops etc. Appendix A contains a maintained list of stakeholders in the ARPO region.

## IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS REQUIRING TARGETED PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Albemarle rural Planning Organization will actively seek out opportunities for inclusion in the transportation planning public involvement process to those groups or persons that may traditionally or historically not be included or involved. Those groups or persons will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. The Poor
2. The Elderly
3. The Disabled
4. Minorities
5. ESL population

## POSTING OF DRAFT AND FINAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Copies of draft and final versions of certain planning documents will be posted on the Albemarle commission website under the Albemarle Rural Planning organization tab as well as distributed to the Albemarle Rural Planning Organization member governments for posting on individual websites at their request.

## Public Input

### PUBLIC COMMENT AT ALBEMARLE RPO RTCC AND RTAC MEETINGS

The Albemarle RPO RTCC and RTAC meetings are open to the public and provide opportunity for public comment.

### PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings will be held by the Albemarle RPO RTCC and RTAC prior to taking action on specific planning documents. These actions may include:

1. Adoption of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) project list as required.

### SURVEYS

Surveys may be developed, administered, and analyzed to gauge the opinions and values of potentially affected citizens on specific transportation planning issues and/or projects.

## Schedule of Public Involvement

1. Planning documents- All official letters and resolutions adopted by the ARPO RTAC Board are kept at the Albemarle Rural Planning Organization office located on Dobbs Street in Hertford North Carolina. These documents will be made available to the public upon request. All RTCC and RTAC minutes are maintained on the ARPO website.
2. Meetings – RTCC and RTAC meetings are open to the public, and will include opportunity for public comment.
3. Public Hearings - Notification of all public hearings held by the Albemarle RPO will be posted on the ARPO website and provided to the news media in the ARPO region.
4. Press Releases- All press releases issued by the Albemarle RPO will be sent to news media in the ARPO region.

## Response to Public Input

Public involvement may be documented in a variety of ways. Written or oral comments received during a meeting of the ARPO RTCC and RTAC boards will be included in the

meeting minutes. Results of surveys will be compiled, summarized, and presented to the RTCC and RTAC and kept on file. Public comments may also be included in appendices in formal documents or plans for which they were made. The RTAC may also direct Albemarle RPO staff to respond directly to public comments.

# Appendices

Appendix A: Stakeholders

Appendix B: Media Contacts

## Appendix A: Stakeholders

### LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Camden County

Currituck County

Chowan County

The Town of Edenton

Dare County

The Town of Duck

The Town of Southern Shores

The Town of Kitty Hawk

The Town of Kill Devil Hills

The Town of Nags Head

The Town of Manteo

Gates County

The Town of Gatesville

Hyde County

Washington County

The Town of Plymouth

The Town of Roper

The Town of Creswell

Tyrrell County

The Town of Columbia

Pasquotank County



The City of Elizabeth City  
Perquimans County  
The Town of Hertford  
The Town of Winfall

## OTHER GOVERNMENTAL

North Carolina Department of Transportation

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS

Perquimans County Economic Development Commission  
Pasquotank County economic Development Commission  
Camden County Economic Development Commission  
Currituck County Economic Development Commission

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

ICPTA  
GITS  
Hyde Transit  
Riverlight

## CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce  
Currituck County Chamber of Commerce  
Hyde County Chamber of Commerce  
Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Tyrrell County Chamber of Commerce

Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Edenton Chowan Chamber of Commerce

Gates County Chamber of Commerce

## **OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

Public school systems

Public Safety

Police Departments

Sherriff's Departments

EMS

Cycling and walking groups

Recreation Departments

Community Colleges

Downtown Associations

Tourism development Authorities

## **REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Albemarle Commission Area Agency on Aging

Albemarle Commission Regional Council

Northeastern Workforce Development Board

## Appendix B: Media Contacts

### RADIO STATIONS

104.1

### NEWSPAPERS

The Daily Advance

The Coastland Times

The Outer Banks Voice

The Chowan Herald

The Washington Daily News

The Ocracoke Observer

The Roanoke-Chowan News-Herald

Gates County Index