

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Southern Alleghenies Rural Planning
Organization (RPO)

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SAP&DC
SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES PLANNING
& DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

An outline of standard procedures for public involvement in the transportation planning process



Southern Alleghenies Rural Planning Organization (RPO)
Public Participation Plan (PPP)

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Southern Alleghenies Rural Planning Organization (RPO)

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Appendix I. Interested Parties

This work was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration. The contents of this plan reflect the views of the author(s), who is (are) responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, The United States Department of Transportation, or the Federal Highway Administration at the time of publication. This plan does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

Southern Alleghenies RPO Public Participation Plan

I. Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Southern Alleghenies Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Public Participation Plan (PPP) is to outline a series of standard procedures for informing the public and involving them in the transportation planning process. The PPP ensures that the Southern Alleghenies RPO has a proactive and meaningful public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, and full public access by all segments of the population to key decisions. It serves as a guide to outline public participation activities for transportation-related public meetings, the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

II. Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission Background

The Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC) is a Local Development District (LDD) that serves Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset Counties. Under contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), SAP&DC is responsible for transportation planning for the Southern Alleghenies RPO, which consists of Bedford, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset Counties. The Southern Alleghenies RPO approves the development and implementation of highway, bridge, transit, and other transportation facilities and services.

III. Objectives

The Southern Alleghenies RPO shall ensure that public participation is consistent with the following objectives during the development of all transportation plans and programs:

- Seek the active participation, consultation, and involvement of all interested parties in the transportation planning process. Interested parties are to include citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties.
- Hold all public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times to encourage the participation of all interested parties as well as underrepresented groups including minorities, low income, and persons with disabilities.
- Ensure that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on all transportation plans and programs including the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Employ visualization techniques to present transportation plans and programs including charts, graphs, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology.

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- Make public information available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as websites, to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information by all interested parties.

IV: Southern Alleghenies RPO Profile

Population Change

According to the 2010 Decennial Census, just under 190,000 people live in the RPO region. **Figure 1** shows population change in each county between 1980 and 2010. Over this time period the region experienced a slight growth in total population, increasing by 1.68%. Fulton, Bedford, and Huntingdon Counties have experienced population growth since 1980, with Fulton County having the highest growth rate of 15.6%. However, between 2000 and 2010, growth in Fulton and Huntingdon Counties slowed, and Bedford County experienced a slight population decrease over that decade. Somerset County, although the most highly populated county in the RPO, was the only county to experience an overall population decline between 1980 and 2010, losing 4.2% of its total.

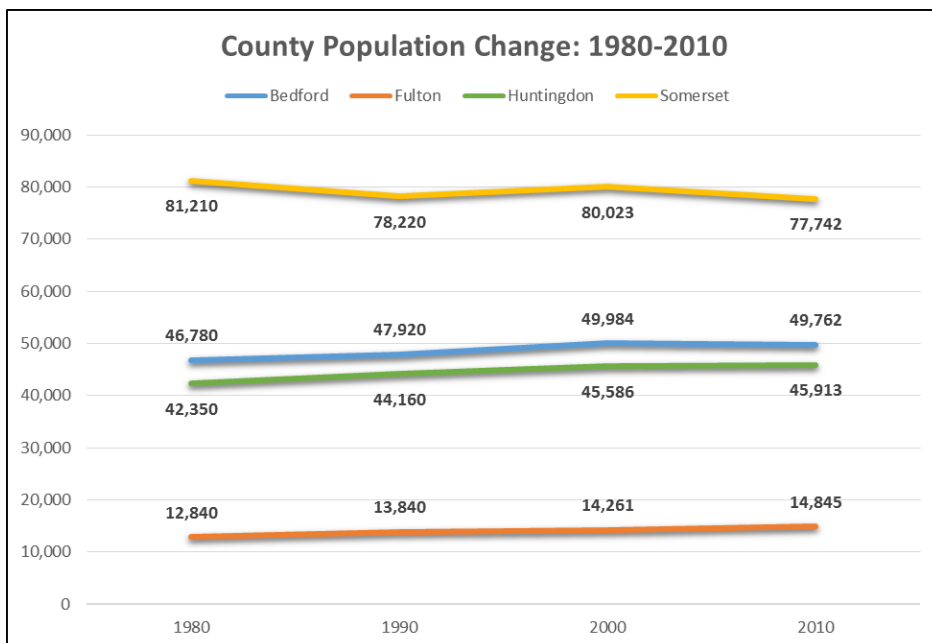


Figure 1: Population change by county, 1980-2010; *US Decennial Census 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010*

Age

The population of the RPO region has been aging in recent decades. The region's average median age grew from 38.9 years in 2000 (US 2000 Decennial Census) to 42.8 years in 2010 (US 2010 Decennial Census). **Table 1** illustrates the region's age composition. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates indicate that between 1990 and 2010, the region has experienced a decrease in all age groups less than 45 years of age, with the largest decrease experienced in the 25 – 34 year age range. Conversely, those age cohorts over the age of 45 years have been increasing. The aging population will have a significant impact on the future transportation needs of the region, including increased demand on transit and human services transportation providers.

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Table 1. Regional Age Cohorts 1990 to 2010

	<5 years	5-19 years	20-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75-84 years	85 and over
1990	6.44%	21.31%	6.42%	15.12%	14.38%	10.71%	10.24%	9.17%	4.89%	1.31%
2000	5.65%	19.43%	5.73%	12.72%	15.55%	13.93%	10.39%	8.80%	5.94%	1.87%
2010	5.43%	18.08%	5.38%	10.90%	13.33%	15.45%	13.68%	9.65%	5.88%	2.23%
Change	(1.01%)	(3.23%)	(1.04%)	(4.22%)	(1.05%)	4.74%	3.44%	0.48%	0.99%	0.92%

US Decennial Census 1990, 2000, 2010

Figure 2 shows elderly population (age 65+) by municipality. Nearly 38% of the municipalities in the region have significant elderly populations (20% or greater). Notably, at least 40% of the residents of Paint and Seven Springs Boroughs in Somerset County, and Coalmont Borough in Huntingdon County were in the 65+ age range.

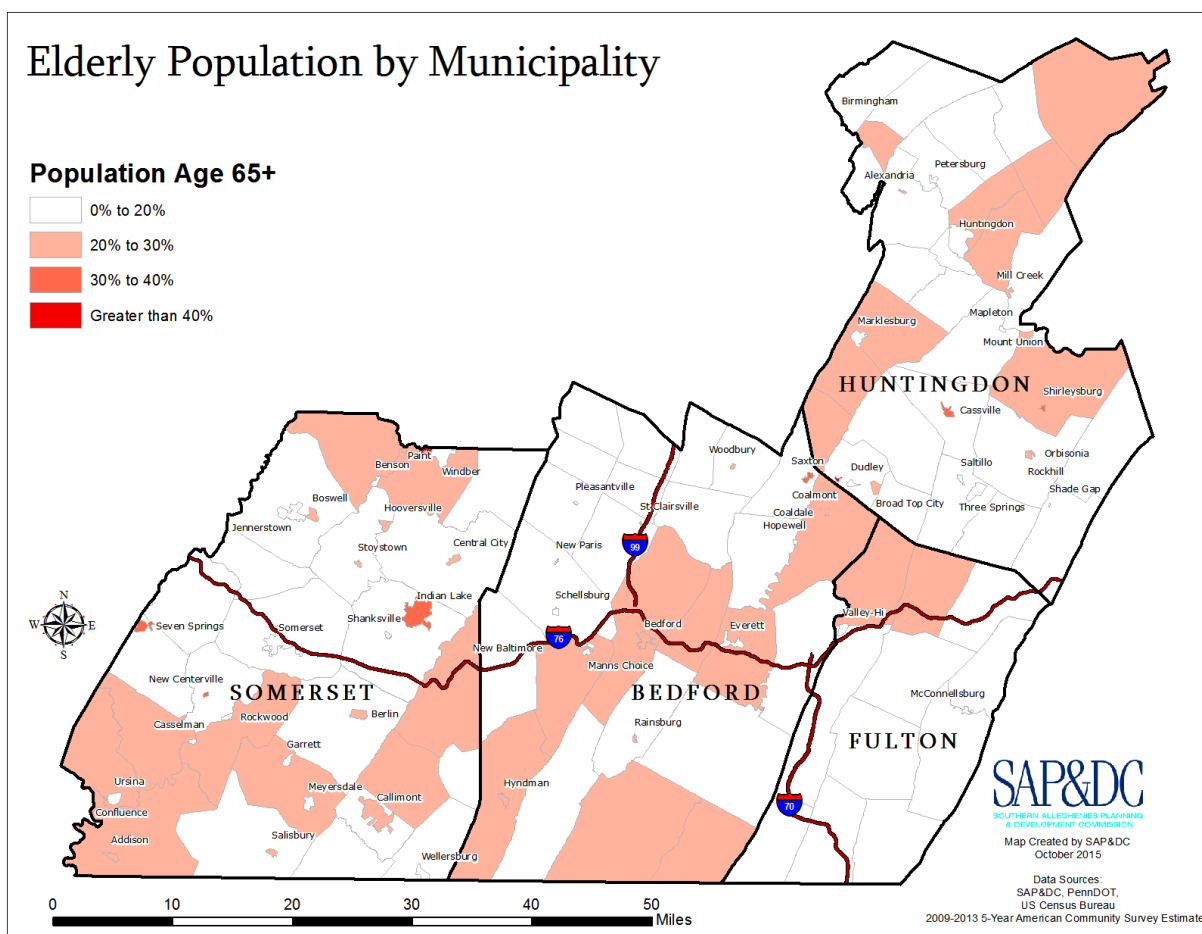


Figure 2: Regional elderly population by municipality; 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

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Minority Population

The region is composed of nearly 96% White individuals. Blacks, or African Americans, make up slightly more than 2% of the population. Other minorities, which include American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islanders, Other Races, and Two or More Races, account for just under 2% of the regional population. The largest minority groups found in the region are Black/African American and those identifying as Two or More Races. **Table 3** details the racial composition of the region.

Table 3. Race					
	Bedford County	Fulton County	Huntingdon County	Somerset County	Regional Average
White alone	98.0%	97.3%	92.5%	96.0%	95.95%
Black or African American alone	0.5%	1.0%	5.2%	2.4%	2.28%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.15%
Asian alone	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%	0.25%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
Some other race alone	0.3%	0.3%	0.9%	0.6%	0.53%
Two or more races	0.8%	1.0%	0.9%	0.6%	0.83%

US Decennial Census, 2010

Among municipalities, the highest concentrations of minority populations are located in Mount Union Borough and Smithfield Township in Huntingdon County, as well as in Somerset Township in Somerset County. The uncharacteristically large minority percentages in Somerset (18.5%) and Smithfield (51.5%) Townships can likely be attributed to the group quarters at the Pennsylvania State Correctional Facilities located in these municipalities.

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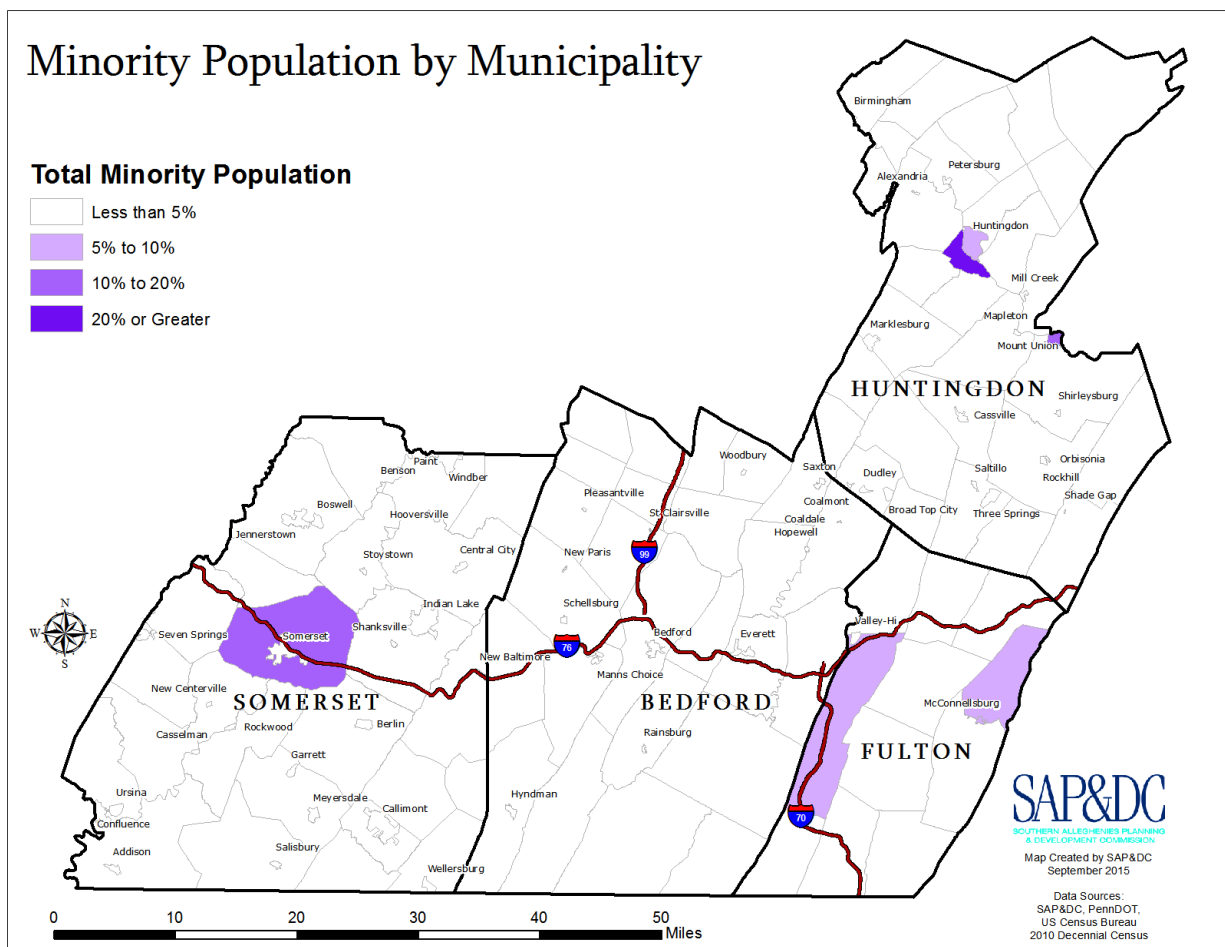


Figure 3: Regional minority population by municipality; 2010 Decennial Census

Income

According to the 2009-2013 ACS Estimates, the average median household income in the RPO region was \$44,883 (2013 inflation adjusted dollars), which was 14.6% below the Pennsylvania median of \$52,548 and 15.4% below the United States median of \$53,046. During this time period, Fulton was the only county to exceed the average median income for the region, at \$48,461. **Table 4** lists median household income by county and the percentage of municipalities within those counties that had median household incomes below the regional average.

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Table 4. Median Household Income

	Bedford County	Fulton County	Huntingdon County	Somerset County	Regional Average
Median Household Income	\$43,290	\$48,461	\$44,183	\$43,597	\$44,883
Percent of Municipalities Below Regional Median	55.3%	15.4%	41.7%	62.0%	49.7%

2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

The ACS Estimates indicate that nearly 85% of municipalities in Fulton County had a household median income exceeding the regional average. In contrast, only 38% of municipalities in Somerset County had a median household income above the regional average. **Figure 4** shows the distribution of municipalities within the region where the average median household income is below the regional average.

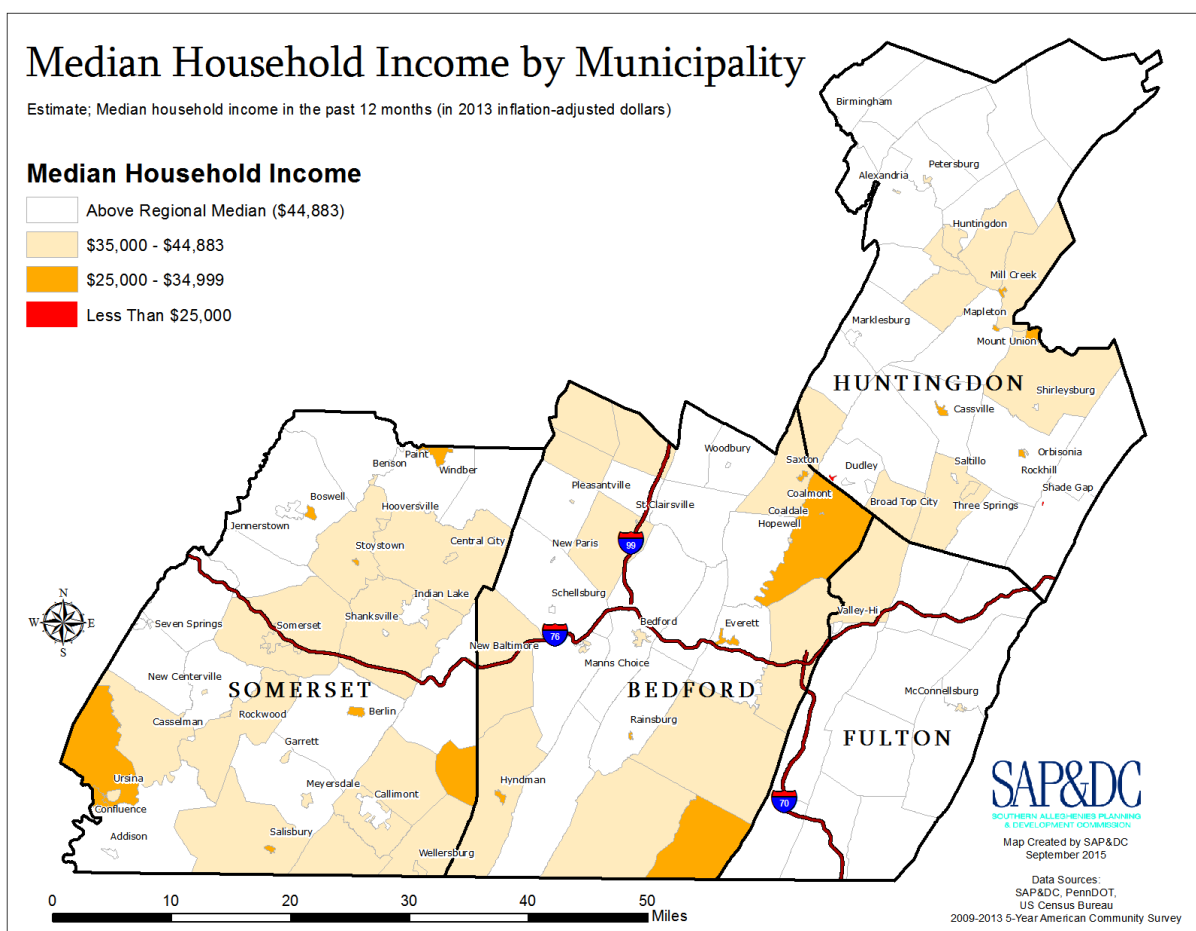


Figure 4: Median household income by municipality; 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

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Disability

Approximately 16.3% of the region's civilian non-institutionalized population has a reported disability, which is higher than the Pennsylvania average of 13.2% and the United States average of 12.1%. These disabilities include difficulty with hearing, vision, cognitive ability, ambulatory function, self-care, or independent living. **Table 5** shows the distribution of the disabled populations by county. Total percentage of disabled populations in Bedford and Somerset Counties exceed the regional average.

Table 5. Disability Status of the Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population

	Bedford County	Fulton County	Huntingdon County	Somerset County	RPO Region
Total Population	48,932	14,725	42,054	73,256	178,967
Population With A Disability	8,293	2,254	6,495	12,172	29,214
Percent With A Disability	16.9%	15.3%	15.4%	16.6%	16.3%

2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Among municipalities, nearly 79% of the region's communities have disabled populations exceeding the Pennsylvania average of 13.2%. **Figure 5** shows the distribution of the municipalities reporting total disabled individuals in excess of the state average. As many of the communities in the region are very rural in nature, residents with disabilities are presented with significant transportation challenges, and their participation in public meetings is likely to be very limited.

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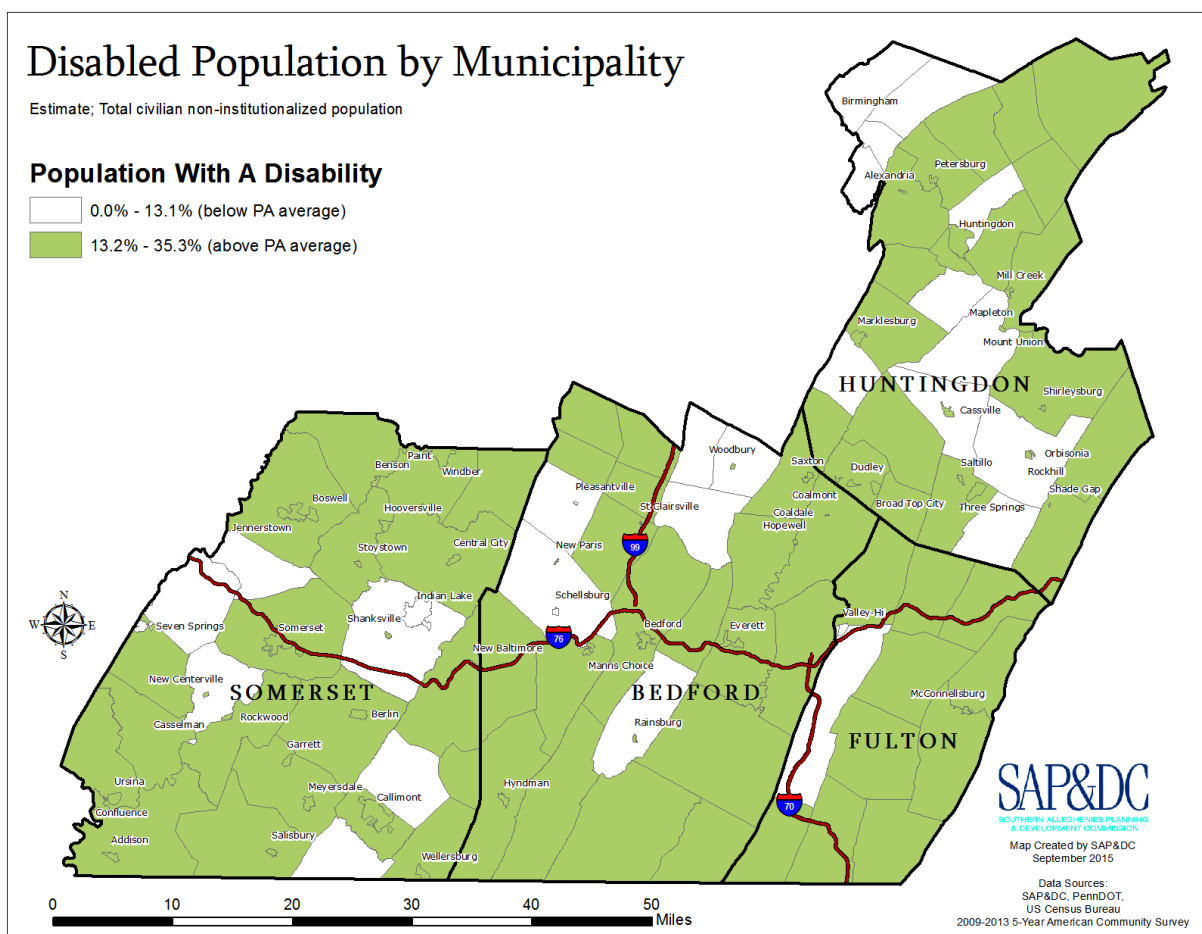


Figure 5: Disabled population by municipality; 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Language

The region is largely an English speaking population (96.7%). The most common Non-English languages spoken at home are Other Indo-European Languages (1.90%), such as Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, French, or German, and Spanish (1.12%). **Table 6** summarizes the language spoken at home as a percentage of the population age five and older. Just under one percent of the population aged five years and over speaks English less than “very well”. Of those who speak English less than “very well”, the most common language spoken is Spanish or Other Indo-European Languages. The RPO has a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan and procedures in place to facilitate the needs of the LEP populations and afford them the opportunity to give meaningful input to the transportation planning process.

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Table 6. Language Spoken at Home

	Bedford County	Fulton County	Huntingdon County	Somerset County	Regional Average
Population 5 years and over	46,961	13,925	43,538	73,729	
% Speak only English	97.0%	98.5%	96.8%	96.1%	96.7%
% Speak English less than “very well”	0.6%	0.4%	1.0%	1.3%	0.8%
% Speak Spanish	0.9%	0.7%	1.7%	1.0%	1.1%
% Speak Other Indo-European Languages	2.0%	0.7%	1.1%	2.5%	1.9%
% Speak Asian and Pacific Island Languages	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
% Speak Other Languages	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%

2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Figure 6 shows spoken language trends among the region’s municipalities. The highest concentrations of individuals who speak languages other than English exist in Elk Lick and Greenville Townships in Somerset County. Over 76% of the region’s municipalities have less than 1% of residents that speak a language other than English.

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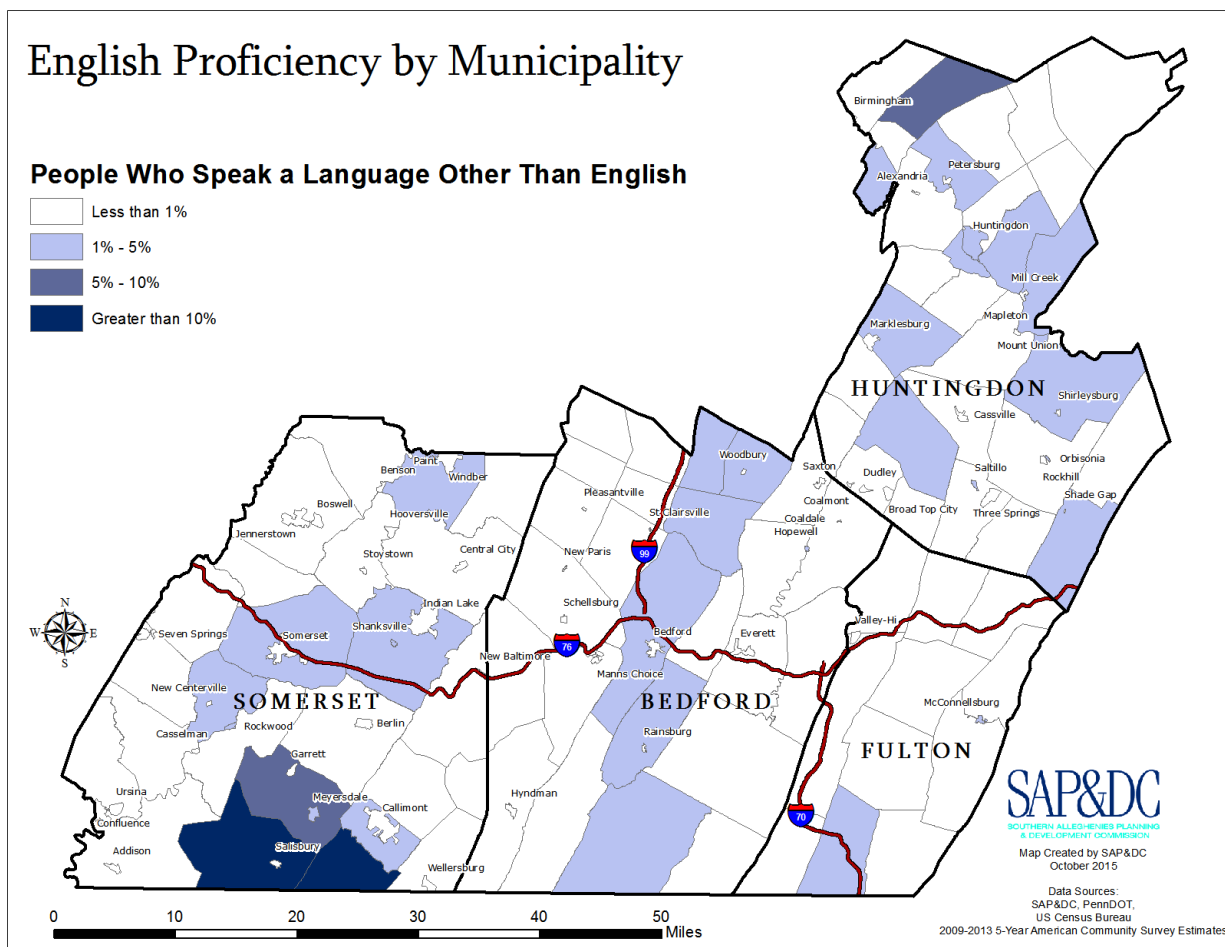


Figure 6: Percentage of individuals speaking a language other than English by municipality; *2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates*

V: Public Participation Activities

During the development of all transportation plans and programs, the Southern Alleghenies RPO will employ the following public participation activities consistent with the objectives outlined in Section III above:

a) Public Participation Plan (PPP)

- A public comment period will be provided for a minimum of 45 calendar days to allow for review and comment by all interested parties. Any major amendments or updates to the plan must adhere to this requirement. Minor revisions, such as periodic data updates, are not subject to a public comment requirement.

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- The public comment period will be announced in the Bedford Gazette, the Fulton County News, the Huntingdon Daily News, and the Somerset Daily American as well as on the SAP&DC website (www.sapdc.org).
- During the public comment period, a final draft of the Public Participation Plan will be made available for review and comment on SAP&DC's website (www.sapdc.org) as well as at SAP&DC's office in Altoona, PA.
- Prior to adoption of the plan, a minimum of one public meeting will be held to allow for public review and comment. This meeting may coincide with a Rural Transportation Technical Committee (RTTC) or Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) meeting. Charts, graphs, slide shows, and maps will be used in the plan and during the public meeting where necessary and appropriate.
- Comments can be submitted via e-mail, mail, phone, or verbally at a scheduled public meeting.
- All comments will be reviewed by the Rural Transportation Technical Committee (RTTC) and the Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) prior to adoption of the plan. All comments will be included as an Appendix to the final plan.

b) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

- During the LRTP update process, one initial public meeting will be held in each of the four RPO counties to gather input on transportation-related issues and concerns from local stakeholders and interested parties.
- A public comment period will be provided for a minimum of 30 calendar days to allow for review and comment by all interested parties. Any major amendments or updates to the plan must adhere to this requirement. Minor revisions, such as periodic data updates, are not subject to a public comment requirement.
- The LRTP public comment period and public meetings will be announced in the Bedford Gazette, the Fulton County News, the Huntingdon Daily News, and the Somerset Daily American as well as on the SAP&DC website (www.sapdc.org).
- During the public comment period, a final draft of the LRTP will be made available for review and comment on SAP&DC's website as well as at the SAP&DC offices, the four rural county planning commissions, and PennDOT District 9-0 offices.
- To satisfy Environmental Justice requirements, a final draft of the LRTP will also be mailed to each municipal government with high minority and poverty concentrations, the human service agencies in Bedford, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset Counties, and representatives for Native American Tribes that once resided in the region.
- Prior to adoption of the plan, a minimum of one public meeting will be held to allow for public review and comment on the draft plan. This meeting may coincide with a Rural Transportation Technical Committee (RTTC) or Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) meeting. Charts, graphs, slide shows, and maps will be used in the plan and during the public meetings where necessary and appropriate.
- Comments can be submitted via e-mail, mail, phone, or verbally at a scheduled public meeting.
- All comments will be reviewed by the Rural Transportation Technical Committee (RTTC) and the Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) prior to adoption of the plan and will be included as an Appendix to the final plan.

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c) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- A public comment period will be provided for a minimum of 30 calendar days to allow for review and comment by all interested parties.
- The TIP public comment period and public meetings will be announced in the Bedford Gazette, the Fulton County News, the Huntingdon Daily News, and the Somerset Daily American as well as on the SAP&DC website (www.sapdc.org).
- During the public comment period, a final TIP package will be made available for review and comment on SAP&DC's website as well as at the SAP&DC offices, the four RPO county planning commissions, and PennDOT District 9-0 offices. The TIP package will include: a draft Highway and Bridge TIP, a draft Transit TIP, a draft MOU for Procedures for STIP and TIP Modifications, a copy of the Public Participation Plan, Environmental Justice Summary with mapping and analysis, the Southern Alleghenies RPO Policies and Procedures, and maps showing project locations in each county. The TIP package will also include a copy of the Twelve Year Program (TYP), during alternating TIP updates.
- To satisfy Environmental Justice requirements, a TIP package will also be mailed to each municipal government with high minority and poverty concentrations, the human service agencies in Bedford, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset Counties, and representatives for Native American Tribes that once resided in the region.
- Prior to adoption of the TIP, one public meeting will be held in each of the four RPO counties to allow for public review and comment. Charts, graphs, slide shows, and maps will be used during the public meetings where necessary and appropriate.
- Comments can be submitted via e-mail, mail, phone, or verbally at a scheduled public meeting.
- All comments will be reviewed by the Rural Transportation Technical Committee (RTTC) and the Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) prior to adoption of the TIP and will be included in the final TIP package.
- Any modifications or amendments to the TIP will conform to the Memorandum of Understanding for Procedures for STIP and TIP Modifications as adopted by the Southern Alleghenies RPO.

d) Public Meetings

- An annual listing of all Rural Transportation Technical Committee (RTTC) and Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) meetings will be published in the Altoona Mirror and on the Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission (SAP&DC) website in January of the respective year.
- All additions, corrections, or deletions to the meeting schedule will be published in the Altoona Mirror and posted to the SAP&DC website (www.sapdc.org) at least seven calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting time.
- All RTTC and RTCC meetings are public meetings and are open to all interested parties.
- Every effort will be made to accommodate persons with disabilities and to ensure that all meeting locations are handicapped accessible.

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- When possible, meetings will be held in places that are accessible to alternate modes of transportation.
- All RTTC and RTCC meeting minutes will be posted to the SAP&DC website reference library.

VI. Plan Evaluation and Update Procedures

The Southern Alleghenies RPO will regularly evaluate the procedures outlined in the Public Participation Plan to assess their validity and efficacy. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) will be updated on a five year cycle, concurrent with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update. Additionally, the necessity of minor revisions, such as updates to data and maps, will be evaluated periodically. These minor revisions will not be subject to the public comment period and public meeting requirements of major plan updates or amendments and may take place more regularly than a full update of the plan.

Appendix I: Interested Parties

1. Area Agencies on Aging
2. Agricultural/Farming Interests
3. Airport Authorities
4. Ambulance Associations
5. Automobile Associations
6. Bicycle and Trail Interests
7. Citizens Groups
8. Community Action Organizations
9. County Partnerships
10. Economic Development Agencies
11. Emergency Management
12. Environmental Agencies
13. Fire Departments
14. Head Starts
15. Highway Heritage Corridors
16. Local and State Elected Officials
17. MH/MR
18. Municipal Engineers
19. Municipalities
20. Old Order Mennonite Community – Horse and Carriage Transportation
21. Local Planning Commissions
22. School Districts
23. Solid Waste Authorities
24. State Police
25. Tribal Contacts
26. Trucking Agencies