



Southern Alleghenies Rural Planning Organization Public Participation Plan

Adopted: December 16, 2020

SAP&DC
SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES PLANNING
& DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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

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Prepared For

Southern Alleghenies Rural Planning Organization (RPO)

NOTICE UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

In accordance with the requirements of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission (SAP&DC) will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: SAP&DC does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under title I of the ADA.

Effective Communication: SAP&DC will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in SAP&DC's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: SAP&DC will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in SAP&DC offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of SAP&DC, should contact the office of Jennifer Sklodowski at 814-949-6507, or jsklodowski@sapdc.org, as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the SAP&DC to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a program, service, or activity of SAP&DC is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Jennifer Sklodowski at 814-949-6507, or jsklodowski@sapdc.org.

SAP&DC will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

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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.

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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, project-level outreach, 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 is comprised of the following committees: Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) and the Rural Transportation Technical Committee (RTTC). The RTTC's role is to provide input and expertise to inform the RTCC and recommend specific development of regional transportation policy and priorities, including adoption of planning documents like the Southern Alleghenies Regional TIP. The diverse RTTC membership results in expanded regional involvement and ensures that the issues of the region are addressed. The RTCC serves as the policy committee for the RPO and reviews recommendations from the RTTC. The RTCC and RTTC, at a minimum, meet four (4) times a year in separate or joint meetings.

Representatives on the RTCC include:

- (4) County Commissioners, one from each rural county
 - (1) PennDOT District 9-0 District Executive
 - (1) Representative from SAP&DC (Executive Director)
 - (1) Representative from PennDOT Central Office
 - (1) RTTC Chairperson
- TOTAL: 8 voting members

Representatives on the RTTC include:

- (4) County Planning Directors, one from each rural county
- (4) At-large representatives, one from each RPO county
- (4) Municipal representatives, one from each RPO county
- (1) Representative from PennDOT District 9-0
- (1) Representative from PennDOT Central Office

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- (2) Representatives from SAP&DC
 - (1) Representative from public transportation/transit
 - (2) Representatives from aviation, rail, or freight
 - (1) Representative from non-motorized transportation
- TOTAL: 20 voting members

III. State and Federal Regulations and Requirements

Public Laws

Public involvement in the transportation planning and programming process has been a priority for federal, state, and local officials since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991; and public involvement has remained a hallmark of the transportation planning process in INSTEAs successors: The Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), SAFETEA-LU, and MAP-21.

Sunshine Law

Act 84 of 1986 (as amended in 1993, 1996, and 1998) established that all official actions and deliberations of municipal or agency governing bodies held for the purpose of making a decision take place at meetings that are open to the public. The openness keeps residents more informed and allows for increased public confidence in our governing bodies. The General Assembly of Pennsylvania finds that secrecy in public affairs undermines the faith of the public of government. Major provisions of the original Act are:

- All meetings or hearings of every agency at which formal action is taken are public meetings and shall be open to the public. The board or council has the option to accept all public comment at the beginning of the meeting.
- No formal action shall be valid unless formal action is taken during a public meeting.
- No public meeting of any agency shall be begun, adjourned, recessed, or interrupted for the purpose of an executive session except for labor negotiations and certain disciplinary actions.
- The minutes of a public meeting of an agency shall be promptly recorded and open for examination and inspection by citizens of the Commonwealth. A person attending a meeting of an agency shall have the right to use recording devices to record all the proceedings.
- Every agency shall hold public meetings at specified times and places of which previous notice must be given by posting notice of the public meetings at the principal office of the agency or the building where the meeting is to be held.
- Public notice of meeting times and locations shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation at least once each year.

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Pennsylvania Human Relations Act

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act prohibits certain practices of discrimination because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age or national origin by employers, employment agencies, labor organizations and others as herein defined; creating the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission in the Governor's Office; defining its functions, powers and duties; providing for procedure and enforcement; providing for formulation of an educational program to prevent prejudice; providing for judicial review and enforcement and imposing penalties.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives Federal funds or other Federal financial assistance. Programs that receive Federal funds cannot distinguish among individuals on the basis of race, color or national origin, either directly or indirectly, in the types, quantity, quality or timeliness of program services, aids or benefits that they provide or the manner in which they provide them. Persons with limited English proficiency must be afforded a meaningful opportunity to participate in programs that receive Federal funds. Policies and practices may not deny or have the effect of denying persons with limited English proficiency equal access to Federally-funded programs for which such persons qualify.

Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act was the first disability civil rights law to be enacted in the United States. It prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in programs that receive federal financial assistance and set the stage for enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 504 works together with the ADA and IDEA to protect children and adults with disabilities from exclusion, and unequal treatment in schools, jobs, and the community.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Public entities are required to make services, programs, and activities accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes conducting meetings and hearings in ADA-compliant buildings and providing special accommodations to ensure communications are equally effective for persons with disabilities in order to allow for full participation in meetings, planning, and programming activities.

Environmental Justice

Public involvement must also consider Presidential Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines Environmental Justice as the "fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and income with respect to development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, programs and policies." Fair treatment means that no racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from the operation of industrial, municipal, and commercial enterprises and from the execution

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of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies. As stated in 23 CFR § 450.316, “(1) The RPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for: (vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.”

The Southern Alleghenies RPO has conducted a thorough Environmental Justice Analysis by completing various core activities: Identify EJ Populations, Assess Conditions and Identify Needs, and Evaluate Benefits and Burdens of the Program. Communities identified as having high minority and poverty concentrations will be engaged throughout the entire outreach process. The results of the analysis determine the equity of project investments throughout the region.

IV. Southern Alleghenies RPO Profile

Regional Overview

The Southern Alleghenies RPO Region is home to 149 municipalities across four rural counties that equates to approximately 3,425 square miles of land area. Within this region, there are 1,430 bridges on the State System of 8 feet or greater in length and 262 bridges on the Local System of 20 feet or greater in length, as well as roughly 5,753 miles of roadway. Among these miles of roadway are major transportation corridors such as: I-76 (PA Turnpike), US 219, US 22, US 220, US 522, and US 30. These corridors are a critical part of the transportation network of the region. Services provided by Human Services Agencies include Somerset County Transportation System, Fulton County Family Partnership, and Huntingdon, Bedford, Fulton Area Agency on Aging.

Population Change

According to the 2010 Decennial Census and the 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, just under 190,000 people live in the RPO region. **Figure 1** shows population change in each county between 1980 and 2010, as well as the ACS Estimates. Between the time period of 1980 to 2010 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, according to the 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Population Estimates, all four counties experienced decreases in population between 2010 and 2018. Somerset County experienced the largest loss in population with a rate of -3.59% or 2,793 individuals.

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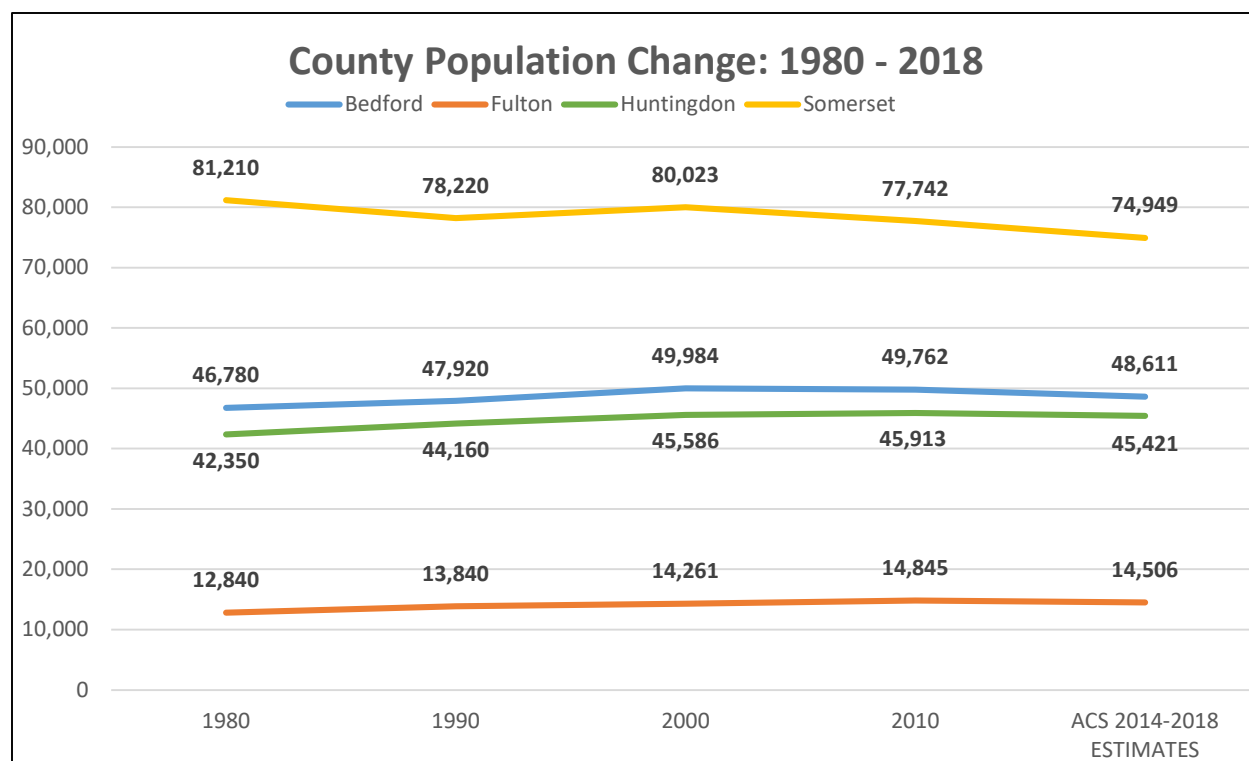


Figure 1: Population change by county, 1980-2018; *Source(s): U.S. Decennial Census 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010 / 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates*

Age

The population of the RPO region has been aging in recent decades. The region's average median age has grown from 38.9 years in 2000 (US 2000 Decennial Census) to 42.8 years in 2010 (US 2010 Decennial Census) and to 45.1 years according to the 2014-2018 ACS 5-year Estimates. **Table 1** illustrates the region's age composition. The U.S. Decennial Census indicates 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 2014-2018 ACS 5-year Estimates indicate that this trend has changed slightly among certain age groups since 2010. Individuals between the age of 20 and 34 have shown an increase, while individuals between 45 and 54 have started to decrease. However, the region is still trending towards an aging population. This 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 2018

	<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%
ACS Estimates	4.78%	16.75%	5.70%	10.98%	11.65%	14.25%	15.05%	11.70%	6.65%	2.65%
Change ('90-'10)	(1.01%)	(3.23%)	(1.04%)	(4.22%)	(1.05%)	4.74%	3.44%	0.48%	0.99%	0.92%
Change ('10-'18)	(0.65%)	(1.33%)	0.32%	0.08%	(1.68%)	(1.20%)	1.37%	2.05%	0.77%	0.42%

Source(s): U.S. Decennial Census 1990, 2000, 2010 / 2014-2018 ACS 5-year Estimates

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Figure 2 shows elderly population (age 65+) by municipality. Approximately 62% 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 Valley-Hi Borough in Fulton County were in the 65+ age range.

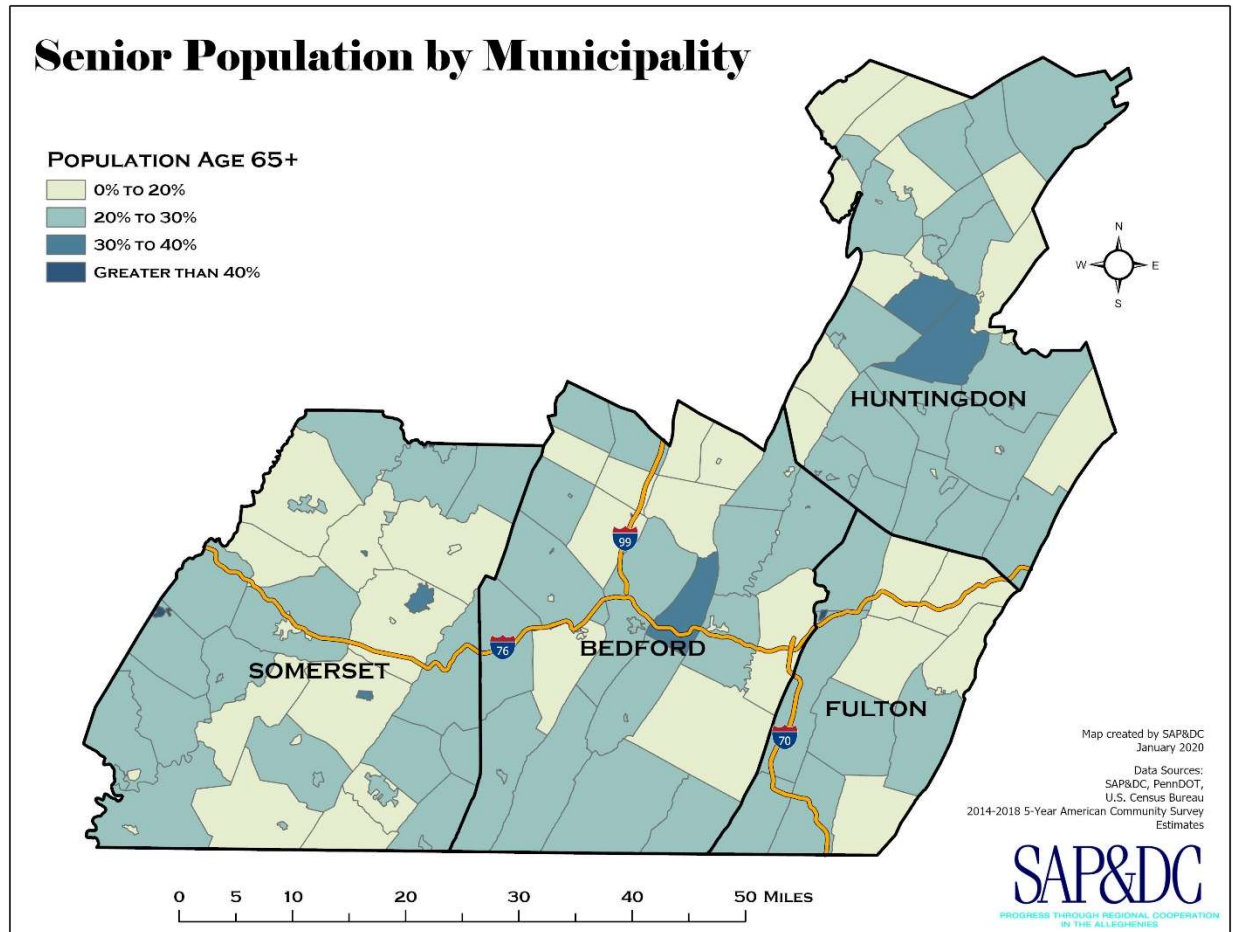


Figure 1: Regional elderly population by municipality; 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Minority Population

The region is composed of nearly 96% White individuals. Black individuals, or African Americans, make up slightly more than 2.5% 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 over 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 2** details the racial composition of the region.

Table 2. Population by Race					
	Bedford County	Fulton County	Huntingdon County	Somerset County	Regional Average
White alone	97.6%	96.4%	91.7%	95.2%	95.23%
Black or African American alone	0.5%	2.1%	5.5%	2.6%	2.68%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.15%
Asian alone	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%	0.0%	0.02%	0.03%	0.01%
Some other race alone	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.5%	0.33%
Two or more races	1.1%	0.9%	1.7%	1.2%	1.23%

Source: 2014-2018 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

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 and Todd Township in Fulton County. This can be seen on **Figure 3**.

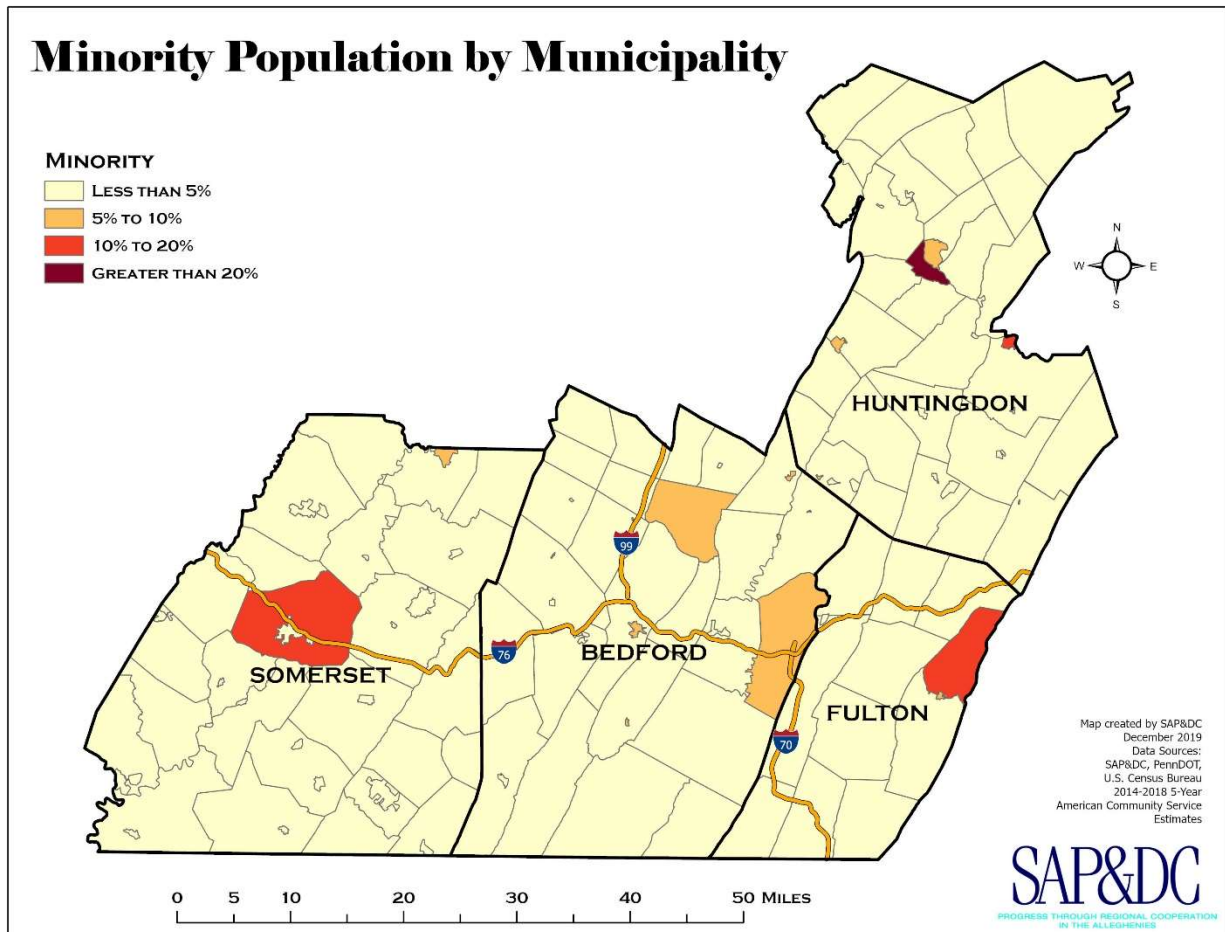


Figure 2: Regional minority population by municipality; 2014-2018 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Income

The Environmental Protection Agency defines low-income as “a reference to populations characterized by limited economic resources.” Although the EJ Core Elements guidance focuses on the federal poverty level, the RPO has also employed regional averages to enhance the analysis.

According to the 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the average median household income in the RPO region was \$49,640 (2018 inflation adjusted dollars), which was 16.5% below the Pennsylvania median of \$59,445 and 17.7% below the United States median of \$60,293. During this time period, Fulton was the only county to exceed the average median income for the region, at \$51,259. **Table 3** 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 3. Median Household Income

	Bedford County	Fulton County	Huntingdon County	Somerset County	Regional Average
Median Household Income	\$49,146	\$51,259	\$48,597	\$48,224	\$49,307`
Percent of Municipalities Below Regional Median	57.9%	33.3%	51.1%	46.9%	47.3%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

The ACS Estimates indicate that about 67% of municipalities in Fulton County had a household median income exceeding the regional average. In contrast, only 42% of municipalities in Bedford 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.

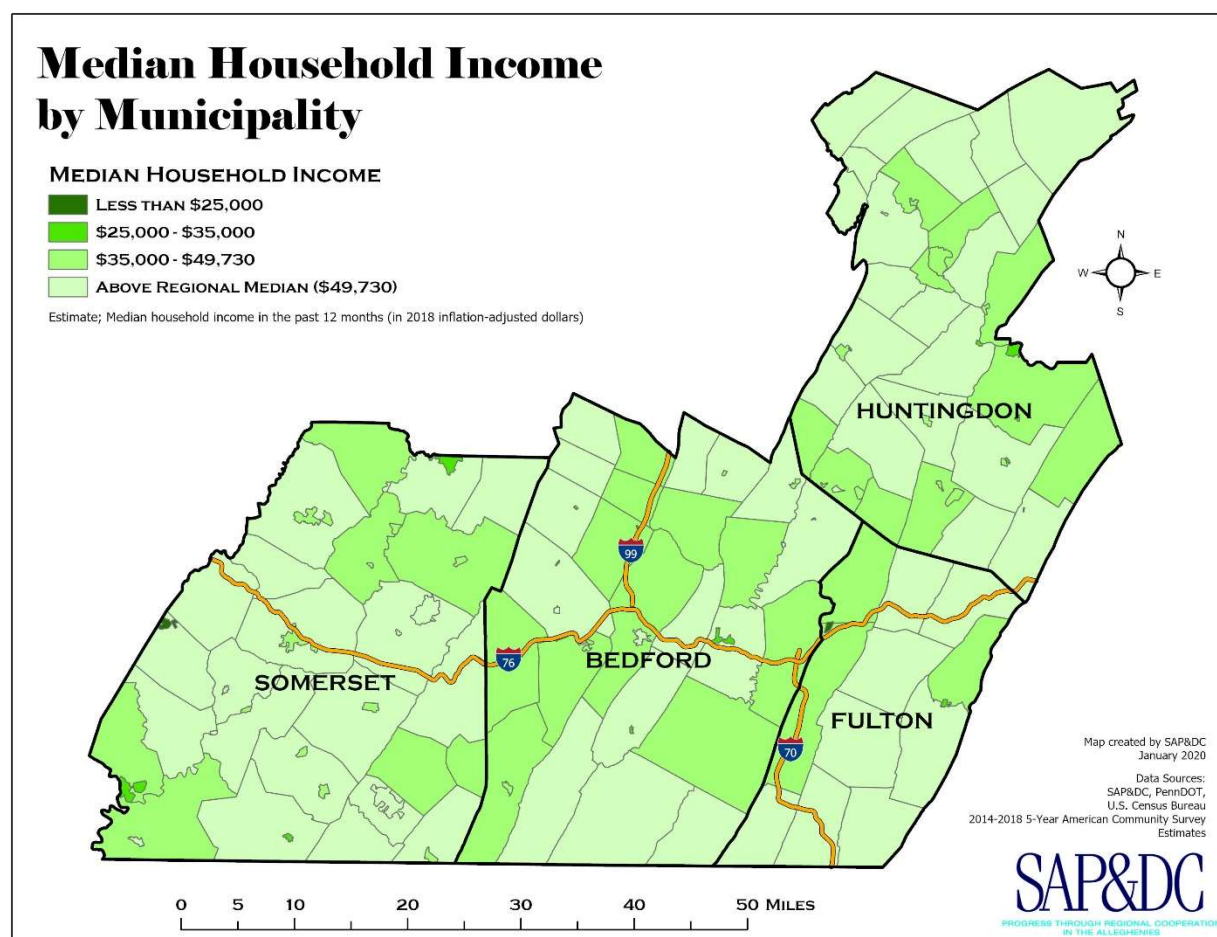


Figure 3: Median household income by municipality; 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

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Disability

Approximately 16.7% of the region's civilian non-institutionalized population has a reported disability, which is higher than the Pennsylvania average of 13.9% and the United States average of 12.6%. These disabilities include difficulty with hearing, vision, cognitive ability, ambulatory function, self-care, or independent living. **Table 4** shows the distribution of the disabled populations by county. The total percentage of disabled populations in Bedford and Huntingdon Counties exceeds the regional average.

Table 4. Disability Status of the Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population

	Bedford County	Fulton County	Huntingdon County	Somerset County	RPO Region
Total Population	48,611	14,506	45,421	74,949	183,487
Population with A Disability	8,403	2,342	6,904	11,538	29,187
Percent with A Disability	17.4%	16.2%	16.7%	16.5%	16.8%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Among municipalities, nearly 78% of the region's communities have disabled populations exceeding the Pennsylvania average of 13.9%. **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.

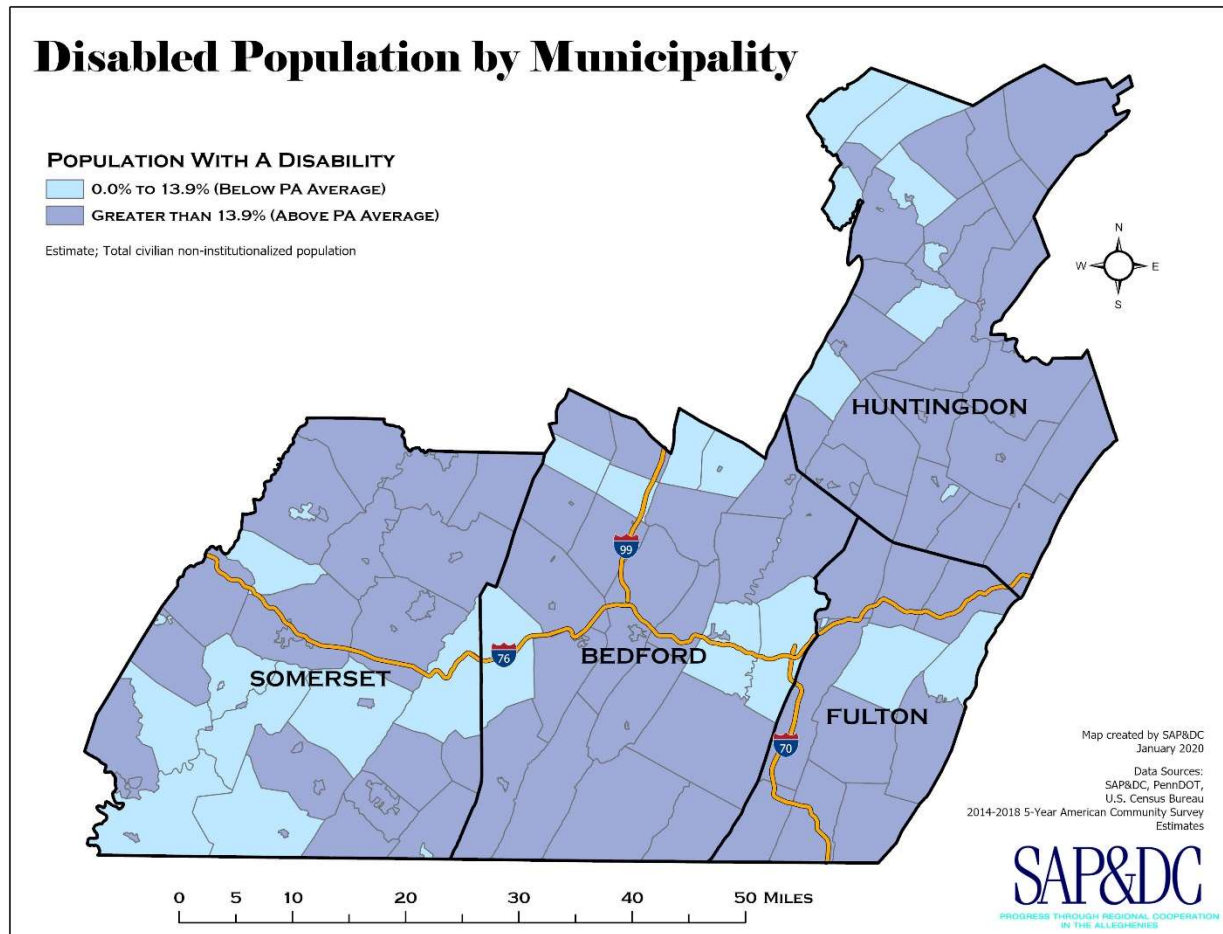


Figure 4: Disabled population by municipality; 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Language

The region is largely an English-speaking population (97%). The most common Non-English languages spoken at home are Other Indo-European Languages (1.5%), such as Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, French, or German, and Spanish (1.1%). **Table 5** summarizes the language spoken at home as a percentage of the population age five and older. Approximately 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 5. Language Spoken at Home

	Bedford County	Fulton County	Huntingdon County	Somerset County	Regional Average
Population 5 years and over	46,187	13,783	43,388	71,515	
% Speak only English	97.4%	98.7%	96.3%	95.7%	97%
% Speak English less than “very well”	0.8%	0.2%	1.2%	1.6%	1%
% Speak Spanish	0.7%	0.5%	1.6%	1.4%	1.1%
% Speak Other Indo-European Languages	1.6%	0.6%	1.4%	2.5%	1.5%
% Speak Asian and Pacific Island Languages	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%
% Speak Other Languages	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

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Figure 6 shows English proficiency trends among the region’s municipalities. The highest concentrations of individuals who speak English less than “very well” are found in Elk Lick and Greenville Townships in Somerset County. Over 75% of the region’s municipalities have less than 1% of residents that speak English less than “very well”.

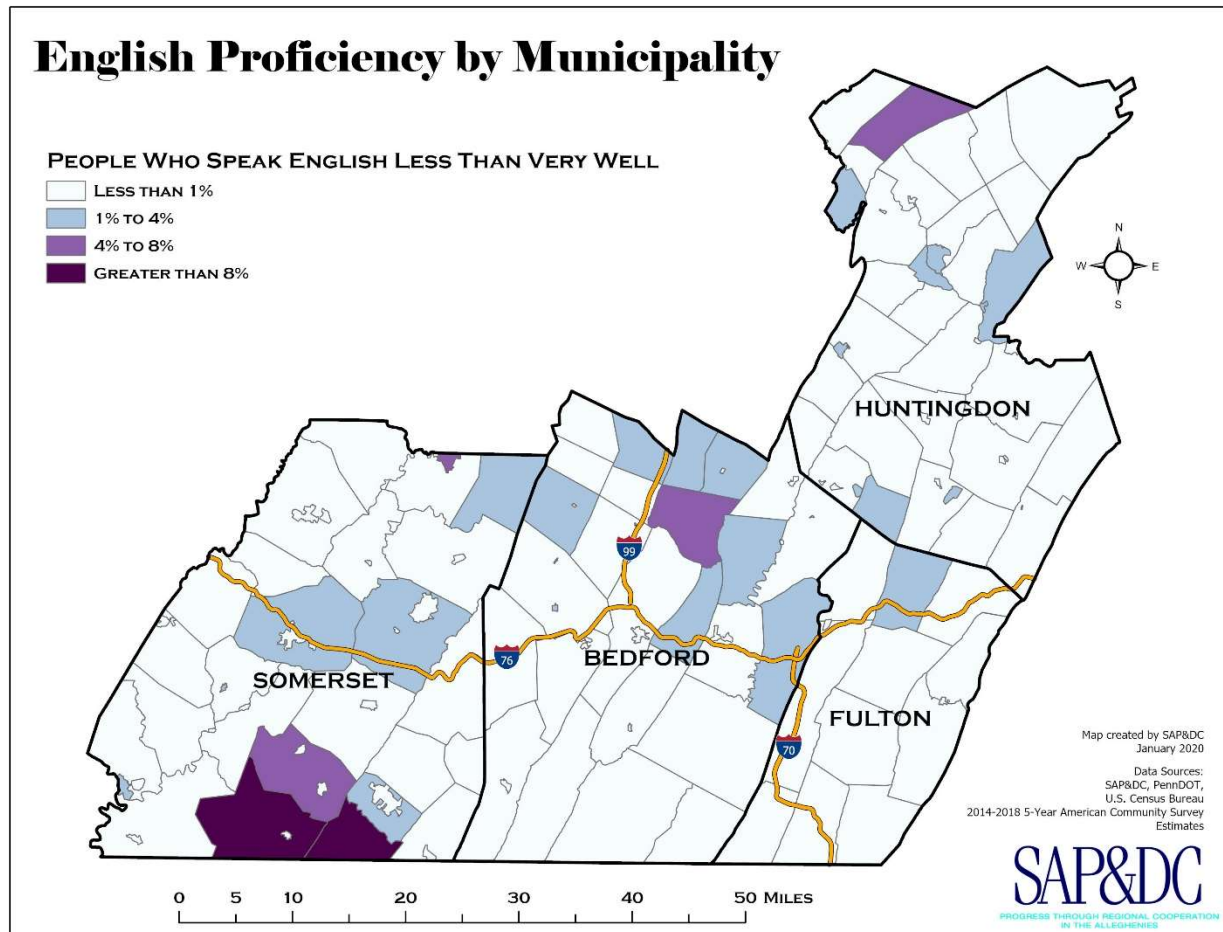


Figure 5: Percentage of individuals who speak English less than very well by municipality; 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

VI: Outreach Methodology

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.
- Employ visualization techniques to present transportation plans and programs including charts, graphs, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology.

Advertisement Methods

During the development of all transportation plans and programs, the Southern Alleghenies RPO will employ some or all of the following advertisement methods consistent with the objectives outlined above. The specific methods used for each activity will be outlined in Appendix II: Public Participation Guidelines.

- **Social Media:** Various social media platforms will be used to make the public aware of upcoming meetings, plan displays, or public comment opportunities. This method can be used to distribute information on a regional RPO-wide level or on a more granular level like individual communities. This method allows for advertisement of planning activities to be more detailed than traditional methods.
- **Newsletter:** The RPO will utilize the SAP&DC newsletter platform to distribute advertisements broadly to pre-determined and new contact lists. Newsletters usually cover several topics and afford the opportunity to provide information and solicit feedback from a reader originally seeking out an unrelated topic.
- **Email:** This method allows for the greatest ability to target advertisements to make the public aware of upcoming meetings, plan displays, or public comment opportunities. It's ubiquity and reliability ensure the target receives the advertisement and allows for follow up for all parties.

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- **Mobile Digital Messaging Systems (DMS):** PennDOT District offices typically employ DMS boards to make the public aware of project specific information. These boards will also be used to make the public aware of upcoming meetings, plan displays, or public comment opportunities.
- **Local and Regional Newspaper:** Regional distributed newspapers like the Altoona Mirror and the Tribune Democrat, and locally distributed newspapers in each of the RPO counties, like the Bedford Gazette, the Fulton County News, the Huntingdon Daily News, and the Somerset Daily American may be used to announce public meetings for recurring transportation committee meetings and public meetings and comment periods for draft and final plans.

Public Participation Methods

During the development of all transportation plans and programs, the Southern Alleghenies RPO will employ some or all following public participation activities consistent with the objectives outlined above. The specific methods used for each activity will be outlined in Appendix II: Public Participation Guidelines. All comments obtained through the methods outlined will be reviewed by the RTTC and RTCC at a scheduled quarterly meeting and included in an appendix of a final plan.

- **Public Comment Period:** These periods will be provided for a minimum of 30-45 calendar days, depending on the plan, 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. As stated above, all comments received through the public comment period(s) will be reviewed and considered by the RTTC and RTCC at a scheduled quarterly meeting and will be incorporated in an appendix within the final plan.
- **Supplemental Comment Period:** If the final plan differs significantly from the original document that went out for public comment, a supplemental comment period of 14 days will be provided for additional public input. Any minor revisions to these documents will not result in a supplemental comment period.
- **Public Display:** During any given public comment period, a final draft of the plan being reviewed will be made available to review at the four RPO county planning commissions, SAP&DC's website (www.sapdc.org) and at SAP&DC's office in Altoona, PA, as well as at PennDOT District 9-0's office in Hollidaysburg, PA. Additionally, the website will allow for comment via a webform on the page where the final draft plan is posted.
- **Public Meeting:** Public meetings to collect public input may be held at various stages during the development of a plan. Initial public meetings will be held to obtain input to help shape the plan in its formative stages, while meetings held during the public comment period may be used to identify plan improvements. Public meetings may also be scheduled on an as needed basis determined throughout the plan development process. These meetings may be held in each of the RPO counties or at SAP&DC's office in Altoona, PA. All additions, corrections, or deletions to the scheduled meeting will

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be published using the method determined by the public involvement matrix at least seven calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting time. Every effort will be made to accommodate persons with disabilities and to ensure that all meeting locations are handicapped accessible.

- **Email, Mail, or Phone:** Comments will continue to be accepted via these more traditional methods. The ubiquity of these methods makes them the most common and easiest way to submit and receive public comments.
- **Virtual Public Involvement (VPI):** VPI meetings will take place in similar fashion to traditional public meetings, except they will be conducted on a web-based platform. The platform will be chosen based on the needs of the specific planning effort. A simple platform with video, screensharing and conferencing capability when the feedback required is more general. A more robust platform may be employed for projects or plans requiring more specific feedback.
- **Environmental Justice (EJ) Outreach:** High minority and poverty concentrations within communities identified through the Environmental Justice analysis will be engaged throughout the entire outreach process. A final draft of plans for which EJ analysis is required will be mailed to each municipal government with high minority and poverty concentrations, the human service agencies in RPO counties, and representatives for Native American Tribes that once resided in the region.
- **Online Survey Tools:** These tools will allow for more targeted and in-depth feedback. These tools also allow for the respondent to give as little or as much feedback as they like.
- **Mobile Texting/SMS Participation Platforms:** Mobile phone texting and SMS systems allow public involvement more spontaneously than traditional public involvement methods have allowed in the past. These platforms will provide a number that a participant can use to text comments or general suggested improvements. Those comments will be collected by the platform and incorporated in the planning activity being conducted.

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 Agencies
12. Environmental Agencies
13. Fire Departments
14. Head Start Organizations
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

Appendix II: Public Participation Guidelines

Public Involvement Matrix					Public Meeting		
Plan or Meeting Type	Potential Advertisement Methods *Bolded selection indicates method(s) that will be used	Advertisement Notice	Potential Public Participation Methods *Bolded selection indicates method(s) that will be used	Public Comment Period	Initial	During Public Comment Period	Regularly Occurring
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	Social Media Newsletter Email DMS Boards Local Newspaper Regional Newspaper	Prior to public meeting	Public Comment Period(s) Public Display Public Meeting Email/Mail/Phone VPI EJ Outreach Online Survey Mobile Texting	30 Days	One meeting in each RPO County	One meeting may coincide with RPO committee meeting	N/A
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Social Media Newsletter Email DMS Boards Local Newspaper Regional Newspaper	Prior to public meeting	Public Comment Period(s) Public Display Public Meeting Email/Mail/Phone VPI EJ Outreach Online Survey Mobile Texting	30 Days	One meeting may coincide with RPO committee meeting	One meeting in each RPO County	N/A
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	Social Media Newsletter Email Local Newspaper	Prior to public meeting	Public Comment Period(s) Public Display Public Meeting Email/Mail/Phone VPI EJ Outreach Online Survey Mobile Texting	45 Days	N/A	One meeting may coincide with RPO committee meeting	N/A
Other Plans	Social Media Newsletter Email Local Newspaper	Prior to public meeting	Public Comment Period(s) Public Display Public Meeting Email/Mail/Phone VPI EJ Outreach Online Survey Mobile Texting	30 Days	As needed	One meeting may coincide with RPO committee meeting	N/A
Technical and Coordinating Committee Meetings	Social Media Newsletter Email Regional Newspaper	Before January 31	Public Meeting Email/Mail/Phone VPI	N/A	N/A	N/A	Quarterly meetings typically held at SAP&DC