

# **Peanut Belt Rural Planning Organization**



## **Public Involvement Plan**

**Adopted 1-17-2019**

260 Premier Blvd  
Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870  
Ph: (252)519-2613 | Fax: (252)519-2632

## I. Purpose

The purpose of the Peanut Belt RPO Public Involvement Plan is to provide guidelines and policies in engaging the public in the transportation planning process. The plan seeks to promote an active role by the public in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects from the early stages of the planning process to detailed project development. The Plan has the following objectives:

- Create opportunity for the public to gain information and knowledge about the transportation planning process and the Peanut Belt RPO.
- Engage the public early and continuously in the transportation planning process
- Develop a public education program on Peanut Belt RPO activities
- Assist the Peanut Belt RPO in developing specific transportation projects that reflect the interests and needs of the community
- Gain the support and trust of the public
- Satisfy the requirements of N.C.G.S. § 136-212 regarding duties of a RPO

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 Peanut Belt RPO region.

## II. Forms of Public Involvement

### A. Public Outreach

Public Outreach is the process of informing the public about the transportation planning process, specific transportation projects, and activities of the Peanut Belt RPO. Typical public outreach strategies may include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- Open RTCC and RTAC Meetings
- Updates to the RPO website
- Press Releases
- Open Houses
- Presentations to civic organizations and other interested groups

The Peanut Belt RPO will utilize one or more of the following strategies, as appropriate, to meet the needs of the public, the RPO, and NCDOT for a given transportation plan, project, or program:

#### Notification of Meetings

Notification of Peanut Belt RPO meetings will be sent to news media in the region and will also be posted on the Peanut Belt RPO website under the Meetings & Event tab.

**Appendix A** contains a maintained list of media contacts that will receive meeting notification.

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## Posting of Draft and Final Planning Documents

Copies of draft and final versions of certain planning documents will be posted on the Peanut Belt RPO's website and may be distributed to Peanut Belt RPO member governments for posting on individual county and town websites.

Copies of draft and final versions of certain planning documents will also be made available for public review at the following public libraries in the Peanut Belt RPO region:

Halifax County Library  
33 S Granville St.  
Halifax, NC 27839  
(252)583-3631

Northampton Memorial Library  
205 W Jefferson St.  
Jackson, NC 27845  
(252)534-3571

Lawrence Memorial Library  
204 E Dundee St.  
Windsor, NC 27983  
(252)794-2244

Winton Public Library  
303 W Tryon St.  
Winton, NC 27986  
(252)358-7855

## Press Releases

Peanut Belt RPO may periodically issue press releases detailing significant actions of the RPO. These actions may include:

- Adoption of Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan
- Adoption of Planning Work Program (PWP)
- Adoption/Endorsement of Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTP)
- Adoption of Project Prioritization (Strategic Transportation Investments – STI) items, such as project submittal lists or local input point assignments
- Adoption of other plans, policies, documents, or resolutions, as appropriate

**Appendix A** contains a maintained list of media contacts that will receive press releases.

## Open Houses

Open houses may be held to provide information on transportation plans and projects, or to provide information to the public on other Peanut Belt RPO activities. Open houses are typically informal and will not have fixed agendas or formal presentations. Planning documents, project maps, and other transportation-related information will be displayed. Peanut Belt RPO staff along with the RTCC/RTAC members will be available to provide details and answer questions.

## Presentations to Civic Organizations

Presentations will be made to interested civic organizations on Peanut Belt RPO activities, the transportation planning process in general, or specific transportation projects upon request. Presentations will be made by Peanut Belt RPO staff and/or NCDOT staff.

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Public Outreach activities will include efforts to involve traditionally underserved groups (i.e., minorities, elderly, low-income persons) in the transportation planning process. These efforts may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Identifying areas in the Peanut Belt RPO region with concentrations of minority, elderly, and low-income populations
- Sending notification of meetings, public hearings, and open houses to County Health Departments, Senior Centers, and/or Community Centers for posting
- Publishing notification of meetings, public hearings, and open houses in both English and Spanish when feasible

#### Peanut Belt RPO Website ([www.peanutbeltrpo.com](http://www.peanutbeltrpo.com))

Peanut Belt RPO will maintain a website to serve as a primary method for sharing information with the public. The website will contain, at a minimum, but not limited to, the following:

- RTCC and RTAC meeting agendas and minutes
- A roster of current RTCC and RTAC committee members
- Information on project selection and prioritization for the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) process
- Contact information

## **B. Public Input**

Public Input is the process of gathering the views, opinions, and ideas of interested individuals and groups in the transportation planning process. Opportunities for public input provided by the Peanut Belt RPO include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### Public Comment at Peanut Belt RPO Meetings

The Peanut Belt RPO RTCC and RTAC hold regular meetings in which all formal business is discussed. These meetings are open to the public. At each meeting, the public is given an opportunity to address the RTCC and RTAC committees on any issues related to the rural transportation planning process. Anyone wishing to speak may indicate so during the time for public comments on the regular meeting agenda, or by contacting the Peanut Belt RPO staff prior to a specific meeting or to arrange a more formal opportunity to speak. Individual comments will be limited to approximately three minutes.

#### Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held by the Peanut Belt RPO's RTAC committee prior to taking formal action on specific planning documents. These actions may include:

- Endorsement of Long-Range Transportation Plan
  - Amendment to Long-Range Transportation Plan
  - Adoption of Planning Work Program (PWP)
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- Endorsement of Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTP)
- Approval of Local Input Point Assignments in the STI Process
- Adoption of STI Prioritization Methodology
- Amendment of RTCC and RTAC By-Laws
- Amendment of the Public Involvement Plan
- Other items as deemed appropriate by the RTAC

Public hearings will typically be held at the beginning of a regular RTAC meeting but may also be held as a standalone meeting if deemed appropriate by the RTAC. Public hearings will consist of a presentation followed by a period for formal public comments and questions. All comments and questions that are received will become public record and will be considered by the RTAC.

### Open Houses

Open houses will be held to provide information on transportation projects to the public in an informal setting. The open houses will also provide the public an opportunity to provide comments. Open houses will have no fixed agendas or formal presentations. Planning documents, project maps, and other transportation-related information will be displayed. RPO staff and committee members and/or NCDOT staff will be available to provide details and answer questions.

### Surveys

Surveys may be developed to gauge citizen opinion, perceptions, and preferences on specific transportation planning issues and/or projects. Survey content, method of distribution, and geographic target area will be dependent on the specific transportation planning issue or project.

### Workshops

Workshops will be in the form of small group discussions used to gather views and opinions on a single transportation topic or project. The workshops will provide detailed information on the specific issue and will allow for in-depth discussion by invited key stakeholders, local government officials, and citizens.

### Contact RPO Staff

The public can reach out to the RPO staff by email, fax, mail, phone, or stop by the office. Below is the contact information.

Peanut Belt Rural Planning Organization  
260 Premier Blvd  
Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870  
Phone – (252)519-2613  
Fax – (252)519-2632  
Email – [coordinator@peanutbeltrpo.com](mailto:coordinator@peanutbeltrpo.com)

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### **III. Schedule of Public Involvement**

#### **A. Routine Public Involvement Opportunities**

- Planning Documents - All documents, resolutions, meeting minutes, etc. adopted by the Peanut Belt RPO are kept at Peanut Belt RPO office, located at 260 Premier Blvd Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870. These documents will be made available for public review upon request.
- Meetings - Regular meetings of the Peanut Belt RPO's RTCC and RTAC committees will be open to the public. A timely opportunity for public comment on the Draft TIP Candidate Highway Project Priority List and the Long Range Regional Transportation Plan will be made available at one RTCC and one RTAC meeting, the latter being a public hearing. Notification of the meetings will be sent to news media in the region.
- Public Hearings - Notification of all public hearings held by the Peanut Belt RPO will be sent to news media in the region. When the public hearing will be held as part of a regularly scheduled meeting, the notifications may be combined.
- Press Releases - All press releases issued by Peanut Belt RPO will be sent to news media in the region.
- Peanut Belt RPO Website – This will provide a general source of information on the RTCC and the RTAC meeting agendas and summaries, Peanut Belt RPO organizational by-law provisions, and other information.

#### **B. Public Involvement for Specific Activities**

Public involvement strategies will vary depending on the particular issue or project for which public comment is desired. Typical actions for specific activities of the Peanut Belt RPO may include, but are not limited to:

##### **1. Long-Range Transportation Plans**

- Workshops
  - Regular Meetings of RTCC and RTAC
  - Public Hearing
  - Posting of Draft and Final Document
  - Presentations to Civic Organizations
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## **2. Prioritization of Projects for Recommendation to State's TIP**

- Regular Meetings of RTCC and RTAC
- Public Hearing
- Posting of Draft and Final Document

## **3. Specific Projects/Issues**

- Press Releases
- Workshops
- Regular Meetings of RTCC and RTAC
- Presentations to Civic Organizations
- Surveys

## **IV. Response to Public Input**

Public involvement in the Peanut Belt RPO's transportation planning activities may be documented in a variety of ways. Comments received during a meeting of the Peanut Belt RPO's RTCC or RTAC will be included in the meeting minutes. Also, any comments received during a public hearing held by the Peanut Belt RPO's RTAC will be included in the meeting minutes. Written comments received during workshops, open houses, or presentations to civic organizations will be presented to the RTCC and RTAC and kept on file. Results of surveys will be compiled, summarized, presented to the RTCC and RTAC, and kept on file.

Significant public comments may be included as appendices in formal documents or plans for which they were made.

## **V. Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Media Contacts**

### **Appendix B: Stakeholders**

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## Appendix A: Media Contacts

### Newspapers

The Daily Herald  
PO Box 520  
Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870  
PH: (252)537-2505

Roanoke-Chowan News Herald  
PO Box 1325  
Ahoskie, NC 27910  
PH: (252)332-2123

RRSpin.com  
PO Box 1521  
Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870  
Ph: (252)578-6786

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## **Appendix B: Key Stakeholders**

### **Local Governments**

#### **Bertie County**

Town of Askewville

Town of Aulander

Town of Colerain

Town of Kelford

Town of Lewiston

Town of Powellsville

Town of Roxabel

Town of Windsor

#### **Halifax County**

Town of Enfield

Town of Halifax

Town of Hobgood

Town of Littleton

Town of Roanoke Rapids

Town of Scotland Neck

Town of Weldon

#### **Hertford County**

Town of Ahoskie

Town of Como

Town of Harrellsville

Town of Murfreesboro

Town of Winton

#### **Northampton County**

Town of Conway

Town of Garysburg

Town of Gaston

Town of Jackson

Town of Lasker

Town of Rich Square

Town of Woodland

### **Economic Development Commissions**

Bertie County Economic Development Commission

Hertford County Economic Development Commission

Halifax County Economic Development Commission

Northampton County Economic Development Commission

### Planning Directors

Bertie County Planning Director  
Hertford County Planning Director  
Halifax County Planning Director  
Northampton County Planning Director

### Chambers of Commerce

Windsor Chamber of Commerce  
Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Hertford County Chamber of Commerce  
Northampton County Chamber of Commerce  
Ahoskie Chamber of Commerce  
Lake Gaston Chamber of Commerce

### Regional Organizations

Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (Halifax & Northampton counties)  
Mid-East Council of Governments (Bertie & Hertford)

### Other Governmental

North Carolina Department of Transportation

### Public Transportation Providers

Choanoke Public Transportation Authority

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