



JUNE 2013

# Public Involvement Plan

## **Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) Public Involvement Plan**

### **Background and Purpose**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Office of Civil Rights issued a revised Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) Circular, 4702.1B, effective October 1, 2012, containing new guidelines and requirements from the previous version, Circular 4702.1A, effective May 13, 2007. The revised Circular states that transit providers which operate 50 or more fixed route vehicles in peak service and are located in urbanized areas (UZA) of populations of 200,000 or greater must approve a Public Participation Plan.

The purpose of this plan is to promote public involvement in transit planning decision-making activities. This plan will establish formal procedures that allow for, encourage, and monitor public participation within the RTA service area including, but not limited to, minority individuals, persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and low-income populations. This document describes proactive public outreach strategies and procedures.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The goal of the plan is to offer a variety of opportunities for the general public to engage in transit planning and decision-making activities at RTA in accordance with FTA Circular 4702.1B Chapter III-5 Promoting Inclusive Public Involvement. The objectives of the plan are as follows:

- To determine what non-English languages and other barriers may exist to public participation within western Riverside County.
- To provide a general notification of meetings, particularly forums for public input, in a manner that is understandable to all populations in the area.
- To hold meetings in locations which are accessible and reasonably welcoming to all area residents, including, but not limited to, minority, LEP, and low-income members of the public.
- To utilize a variety of communication methods to capture public input from populations which are typically not likely to attend or engage in public meetings.

### **Identification of Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are those who are either directly or indirectly affected by a plan, project, or program based on decisions related to recommendations or implementation actions.

Those who may be adversely affected or who may be denied benefit of a plan's recommendation(s) are of particular interest in the identification of specific stakeholders.

General stakeholders within the RTA service area include, but are not limited to:

- All eighteen (18) cities and unincorporated communities
- Major Employers
- Major Colleges, Universities, and School Districts
- March Joint Powers Authority
- Metrolink
- Non-profit and private business community
- Other regional and municipal transit providers including the Corona Cruiser, North County Transit District, Omnitrans, Orange County Transportation Authority, Pass Transit, SunLine Transit Agency, and Valley Transportation Services (VTrans)
- Public (including minority, LEP, and low-income populations)
- Riverside County
- Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC)
- RTA Board of Directors
- RTA ADA Quarterly Meetings
- RTA Transportation NOW (TNOW) Chapters
- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
- Transit Advocates
- Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG)

In the cities of Corona, Beaumont and Banning, the RTA coordinates regional services with the Corona Cruiser and Pass Transit. In the City of Riverside, the RTA coordinates with Riverside Special Transportation Services, which provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant service complementing RTA's fixed route services. Additionally, RTA staff periodically meets with social service providers, transit advocates, public members, and other agencies through forums such as Riverside County Transportation Commission's (RCTC) Citizens Advisory Committee, RTA's Quarterly ADA meetings, RTA Board of Directors (Board) meetings, and Transportation Now (TNOW) Chapter meetings.

### **Direct Stakeholders**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 1,728,291 residents exist within the western Riverside County area as depicted in the table below:

Category	Number	Percentage Of
Total	1,728,291	100.0%
Hispanic/Latino	761,397	44.1%
White	673,986	39.0%
African American	118,457	6.9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	8,816	0.5%
Asian	114,561	6.6%
Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	5,444	0.3%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census		
2.5% of the population identifies as two or more races.		

Techniques utilized to engage the general population includes public notices of meetings in the local newspapers, on the RTA website, via social media, written and oral announcements at RTA Board meetings, and community meetings. While these techniques will continue, the RTA will strive to proactively engage members of the public with other cost-effective approaches utilizing a broad range of electronic messaging techniques with the installation of an innovative intelligent transportation system in the near future.

### Minority Populations

In reference to the table above, minority populations comprise almost half of the percentage of the population in western Riverside County. Hispanic/Latino individuals are the largest minority, with 44.1 percent of the total population. African American and Asian persons account for 6.9 percent and 6.6 percent of the population, respectively. A small number of American Indian/Alaska Natives and Hawaiian and Pacific Islander individuals account for less than 1 percent each. Persons who consider themselves to be of more than one race account for 2.5 percent of the population.

### LEP Populations

Per RTA's revisions to the LEP Policy and newly incorporated Language Assistance Plan, reasonable efforts will be made to engage LEP populations using techniques such as the development of public notices in appropriate non-English languages that will provide contact information where individuals can be informed of the affected project or services to provide input or comments. Other efforts could include conducting focus groups in concentrations of LEP populated areas may also be established for the purpose of gaining input from a particular defined portion of the community. In addition, non-profit organizations and other advocacy groups can be utilized to disseminate

information to LEP populations. Such non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, or other organizations can provide insight into the needs of LEP populations.

### Low-income Populations

To ensure low-income households are not under-served, the RTA will identify populations within the service area with a per capita income of 80 percent or less of the national average in order to establish low income thresholds. Low-income populations in the western Riverside County area should be given every reasonable opportunity to provide input on transportation plans and programs to avoid disproportionate harm, or lack of benefit, of transportation programs and projects.

In summary, methods of gaining input either directly or indirectly from minority, LEP, and low-income population groups include a wider range of notification techniques, focus group meetings or informal interviews, if required, and the use of agency or advocacy group contacts through non-profit or private organizations.

### **Public Comment Process for Major Service and Fare Changes**

In addition to the outreach efforts identified earlier in this plan, the RTA will utilize the Board approved Public Hearing Policy for Major Service and Fare Changes to announce proposed major changes to services and fares. In accordance with this policy, the public will be notified of proposed major service or fare changes resulting in increases or decreases as well as identified potential disparate or disproportionate burden impacts. In addition, public comments will be presented to the Board prior to approval of the proposed major service or fare change.

The following procedures, strategies, techniques, and media will be utilized to engage and notify the public in the public hearing process prior to Board approval:

- Place printed materials on buses: interior cards, flyers, and/or comment cards describing the proposed changes.
- Information available on website.
- Social media outlets: email blasts, Facebook, Twitter.
- Press releases and meetings with local media representatives.
- Presentations to professional, citizen, and student organizations.
- User and non-user surveys.
- Use of various illustrative visualization techniques to convey the information, including, but not limited to, charts, graphs, photos, maps, and the Internet.

## **Conclusion**

This document will serve as the Public Involvement Plan for the RTA. A public comment period to obtain input in regards to the proposed plan occurred between May 24 through June 27, 2013. The announcement of the plan was advertised in a manner reasonably expected to reach the general public including minority, LEP, and low-income populations prior to approval by the RTA Board.

The plan will be available for review on the RTA website, [www.riversidetransit.com](http://www.riversidetransit.com) and at the RTA administrative office. If materials are requested in LEP languages, large type, and/or Braille, staff will make a reasonable attempt to accommodate those needs.

Members of the public can also obtain information about the plan by contacting RTA by phone at (951) 565-5002, email at [comments@riversidetransit.com](mailto:comments@riversidetransit.com), or via standard mail to Riverside Transit Agency, 1825 Third Street, Riverside, CA 92507.