



PICKENS COUNTY, SC PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Mission

Pickens County Government is dedicated to providing timely, efficient, courteous and professional services to all citizens of Pickens County. We will make decisions that promote the best interests of the greater community, and develop the resources, policies, plans and procedures to effectively address public needs. We will pursue and support those programs and projects that best uphold the priorities of Pickens County Council.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to establish public participation policies and procedures for information dissemination and public comment solicitation for development and review of programs and projects carried out by Pickens County.

Federal Agency Requirements for Public Participation

The policy of the federal and state government supports proactive public participation at all stages of the planning process. As a recipient of state funds, Pickens County is required to develop a public participation plan. The public involvement process includes:

- Early and continuous opportunities for involvement
- Public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times
- Timely information on issues, processes, and procedures
- Input on goals, objectives, alternatives, policy, and evaluation criteria
- Seeking out traditionally underserved populations according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Pickens County coordinates with GPATS (Greenville Pickens Area Transportation Study) and ACOG (Appalachian Council of Governments) to ensure local processes are consistent with state and federal policies.

American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 encourages the involvement of people with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services. In accordance with ADA guidelines, all meetings conducted by Pickens County will take place in locations that are accessible to persons with mobility limitations. Pickens County public meeting notices specify that special accommodations will be provided upon request.

Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination by recipients of Federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, and national origin, including matters related to language access for Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons. The objectives of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are:

1. To ensure FTA-assisted benefits and related services are equitably distributed without regard to race, color or national origin.
2. To ensure that both the level and quality of transit services provide equal access and mobility for any person without regard to race, color or national origin.
3. To ensure that access to the planning and decision-making process is open and without regard to race, color or national origin.
4. To ensure that decisions on the location of transit facilities and services are made without regard to race, color or national origin.



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To comply with these objectives, Pickens County has adopted the suggested methodology and framework set forth in the Title VI reporting guidelines (FTA Circular 4702.1, Chapter IV). By using this methodology, Pickens County monitors and compares the performance of its service delivery in line with the stated objectives of its Title VI program.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Title VI directs each Federal agency to develop and implement a system by which limited English proficiency persons can meaningfully access the services it funds. Federal agencies published guidance for their respective grant recipients in order to assist them with their obligations to LEP persons under Title VI. As a result, the FTA published guidance and implemented regulations requiring that grant recipients take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for LEP individuals. Pickens County as an SCDOT grantee is required to ensure meaningful access to benefits, services and information for LEP persons. Pickens County's website offers translation of website information into numerous languages other than English. The County continues to look for additional ways to assist LEP persons as part of its Title VI program.

Pickens County's Public Participation Program Elements

Citizens Input

Pickens County will solicit public input on an ongoing basis thru web-based strategies including, but not necessarily limited to, the County's website and other social media tools. This approach will provide opportunities for proactive, early, and continuing public participation for County projects, programs and decision making. This strategy will allow staff wide latitude to adapt to take advantage of changing communications technologies and to interact with individuals, group, businesses and strategic partners to ensure citizen access and participation. Mailings and other outreach efforts may be made to solicit input from a forum of organizations serving minorities, low- and moderate-income persons, as well as persons with disabilities and limited English proficient populations. Surveys are used to garner feedback from citizens pertaining to various projects. Surveys are made available online and at meeting locations. More structured meetings may be held on specific proposals and projects when desirable to expand support and encourage broad based public participation in the development and review of programs and projects. Pickens County will aggressively promote opportunities for the inclusion of minority, low- and moderate-income and limited English populations in this forum. Public input may be drawn from, but not necessarily limited to, entities such as:

1. The general public
2. Non-profit organizations that provide services to the homeless, LEP populations
3. School Districts
4. Neighborhood Organizations
5. Municipal Partners

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pickens County will continuously monitor, evaluate and improve its public participation process. Regular review will be accomplished by tracking website usage and activity including the number of individuals on Pickens County's contact list that receive newsletters, meeting notices and agendas, and other related materials. Furthermore, the public will be encouraged to provide comments and suggestions through various channels and open dialogue will be maintained with advisory groups throughout the community on transportation and planning issues. A record of



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public comments and those of institutional representatives will be kept, as well as responses to such comments, where pertinent.

The Solicitation of Public Comment

It is Pickens County's policy is to disseminate information and to solicit and respond to public comment regarding transportation projects in a manner which is reasonable and practical. Specific elements of this policy are as follows:

Except when impossible because of an emergency condition, advance notice of not less than fifteen (15) days will be provided to neighborhood and communities affected by transportation projects. The methods of providing such notice include, but are not limited to, distribution of revised timetables, handouts, posted notices and/or media releases. Moreover, notices will be published in a newspaper of general circulation and also, if applicable, in newspapers oriented to the specific groups or communities affected. Such published notices will include information as to the date, time and location of any public hearings. Not sooner than fifteen (15) days after the notices are published will at least one public hearing be held.

Complaints

Any and all Title VI complaints may be directed to Pickens County's Title VI Coordinator:

Pickens County
Human Resources
Attn: Title VI Coordinator
222 McDaniel Ave.
Pickens, SC 29671
kendylb@co.pickens.sc.us
Phone: 864-898-5844