

**Public Participation and Involvement Plan**  
for the  
**Decatur Urbanized Area Transportation Study (DUATS)**

---

**Public Participation and Involvement Plan**

**June 2011**

Prepared by:

City of Decatur  
Department of Development Services  
The Lead Agency for the  
Decatur Urbanized Area Transportation Study  
#1 Gary K. Anderson Plaza  
Decatur, Illinois 62523

---

*In cooperation with:*

**City of Decatur**  
**County of Macon**  
**Decatur Park District**  
**Decatur Public Transit System**  
**Illinois Department of Transportation**  
**Federal Highway Administration**  
**Federal Transit Administration**  
**Macon County Highway Department**  
**Village of Forsyth**  
**Village of Mt. Zion**  
**Village of Harristown**  
**Village of Oreana**

This document was prepared by Mark Smith, DUATS Study Director, and Joselyn Stewart, Transportation Planner, who wish to acknowledge the substantial input and support provided by the member entities of DUATS and our transportation planning partners who include the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and Illinois Department of Transportation.

This project was partially funded and fully supported by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Illinois Department of Transportation and member entities of DUATS.

## INTRODUCTION

DUATS is continuing its effort to make a concerted effort to increase and enhance its position regarding public involvement. DUATS has committed itself to proactively engage the citizens of the County in assisting in our regional transportation planning and problem-solving activities.

This intent is based on the following principles:

- 1) Citizens should be reasonably versed on transportation issues and how transportation related decisions are made which use public tax dollars on public projects. Individuals and communities impacted by the outcome of public projects should want to have their opinions and perspectives taken into consideration.
- 2) Planners cannot maintain current and relevant knowledge about regional problems without spending time listening and learning from citizens who are directly affected.
- 3) Better planning is accomplished through a balance between local and regional priorities.

DUATS intends to more adequately and fully address these principals through communication, consultation, cooperation, and community outreach. At the present time communication, consultation and cooperation are principally accomplished through information sharing and discussion between the members of the Technical and Policy Committees. In order to encourage and expand the public's opportunity to participate in the planning process, positively address the principals, increase communication, consultation and cooperation and initiate a public outreach program, DUATS is committed to the following forms, formats and venues.

## DEFINITIONS

**Administrative Modification** - A minor revision to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that includes minor changes to project or project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously-included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. An administrative modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in non-attainment and maintenance areas).

**Amendment** - A revision to the LRTP or TIP that involves a major change to a project included in the LRTP or TIP, including the addition or deletion of a project or a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). Typically, cost variations of more than 20% will be considered an "amendment" to the TIP. Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. An amendment is a revision that requires public review and comment and re-demonstration of fiscal constraint.

**Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** - A document that projects the needs, issues, and priorities for the Decatur Urbanized Area over at least a twenty-year time period. SAFETEA-LU continues the requirement that the LRTP be updated at least every five years. Before a

transportation project can receive federal funding, it must be consistent with the LRTP and must be included in the TIP.

**Public Involvement** - An open process to seek out and encourage early and continuous public involvement through the development of transportation plans and projects. It is an ongoing process whereby staff, citizens and decision makers exchange information and ideas.

**The Public** - Any interested person, group, organization, or governmental agency other than the sponsoring agency, or any combination thereof. Every effort will be made to include minority, low income, elderly, and other special interest groups.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** - A staged, multi-year, inter-modal program of transportation projects planned within the metropolitan planning area. The project must be consistent with the LRTP. SAFETEA-LU requires that the TIP cover a four (4) period. The TIP is updated annually.

**Unified Work Program (UWP)** - An annual document that summarizes the work areas that DUATS staff will focus on during the program year utilizing the available Federal, State and local funds. It includes the status of ongoing transportation planning activities and the accomplishments which are anticipated. The UWP details the anticipated expenditures for DUATS for the year. Work program procedures contain a description of the functional responsibilities of each participating agency as well as a brief explanation of the means or methodology used to accomplish the work activities for all elements, which are ongoing or periodic in nature.

## **COMMUNICATION**

**The Web** - DUATS' web presence is in conjunction with the City of Decatur's Planning & Building Services Department, which is the Lead Agency. The main page will continue to be [www.ci.decatgur.il.us](http://www.ci.decatgur.il.us). Information about planning and problem-solving activities will be posted on the website for public review and comment. Copies of draft plans, reports, final publications, RFPs, meeting agendas, minutes, and more will also be available. The web page will have interactive features, allowing citizens to register their comments on an ongoing basis.

In keeping with DUATS' initiative to make all transportation materials and related information available to the public, individuals, businesses and interested groups will be encouraged to sign up and be placed on one or more existing distribution lists or to request that a new e-list be created. At least every year, or as determined appropriate by staff, DUATS will issue an update regarding various transportation and related plans and projects and will communicate improvements and progress as they occur within the Metropolitan Planning Area.

**Media Relations** - DUATS will provide notices of all meetings to the local media.

**Citizen Comment** - DUATS will encourage citizens who want to comment on issues of concern or interest to do so during any committee meeting.

## **CONSULTATION**

**Committees** - DUATS will continue to serve on various committees that directly and indirectly influence transportation and related areas of planning. A focus during FY 2012 and beyond will be to encourage and invite citizens interested in transportation planning to become active in areas such as bike-pedestrian paths, environment, land use, job access, housing and sustainability. DUATS members will be encouraged to continue to be active in groups which have areas of interest which intersect with DUATS' mission. DUATS members will build on the relationships developed through these committees and organizations and bring the citizen perspective to bear on transportation planning and projects.

**Let Us Know** - In FY2012, DUATS will initiate a new outreach program called "Let Us Know" in order to gather ongoing commentary from citizens about the region's transportation and related strengths and weaknesses. The initiative will be implemented in two ways.

First, the "Let Us Know" icon will appear on the DUATS home page. Anyone who visits the home page at any time will have the opportunity to click on the icon and register their comments about issues of concern. If the visitor desires a response, staff will respond accordingly. DUATS will maintain an electronic file of all comments.

Secondly, DUATS, will continue to be active and attend meetings of various civic, volunteer, business, neighborhood, and professional organizations to share transportation planning activities and related information. Past practice has been that staff responded to requests for public speakers. Staff is encouraged to be more proactive in marketing DUATS to community groups and this endeavor will continue. A list of approximately three hundred such groups is maintained by DUATS. The list includes organizations such as Rotary Clubs, Lion's Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, AARP, neighborhood associations, neighborhood block groups, faith-based organizations, community development corporations, and many others.

**Long Range Transportation Plans & Plan Updates** - Every five years the long range transportation plan (LRTP) is comprehensively reviewed and updated. Staff will use a variety of techniques to ensure that a broad cross section of citizen and group perspectives are considered. These techniques may include focus groups, stakeholder meetings, issue forums, consultation with planning partners, web-based information exchanges, newsletters, and other public meetings.

During each LRTP revision or when major amendments are proposed or contemplated, relevant documents and maps will be sent to Federal, State and local resource agencies for their suggestions and comments. DUATS will supply the relevant documentation as early in the planning process as possible, but in no instance later than the required public comment period.

Likewise, DUATS intends to provide public notice in the newspaper and on its web site summarizing the context and general area(s) in which changes are proposed and pending. The notice will specifically invite the public to comment. A minimum 30 day comment period will be provided for prior to any changes to the LRTP.

**TIP Development Process** - With the annual solicitation of project proposals for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), staff reviews and makes recommendations regarding priorities and rank during the approved selection and prioritization process. Areas such as safety, ADT, level of service, lanes, jurisdictions benefiting and security are among the criteria used to select projects.

In the past, DUATS has programmed projects using an annual TIP cycle. An option that was explored, but not adopted, was to move to a two (2) year TIP programming cycle. The proposed TIP, including all relevant documents and maps will be sent to Federal, State and local resource agencies for their suggestions and comments. DUATS will supply the relevant documentation as early in the planning process as possible, but in no instance later than the beginning of the required 30 day public comment period.

From time to time, for a variety of reasons, it may become necessary to amend the TIP. Changes are classified as either administrative modifications or amendments.

Although an administrative modification does not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination in non-attainment and maintenance areas, DUATS intends to provide public notice in the newspaper and on its web site summarizing the context and general area(s) in which one or more administrative modifications are proposed and pending. The notice will invite the public to comment within the minimum 14 day prior notice provision.

Amendments require opportunities for public review and comments. DUATS intends to continue to provide public notice in the newspaper and on its web site summarizing the context and general area(s) in which one or more amendments are being proposed and pending. The notice will invite the public to comment at one or more public meetings which times and places will be advertised in the newspaper and on the web site. It is recommended that the previously required 14 day notice and public comment period for amendments remain applicable.

**Corridor and other planning studies** - DUATS will continue to use techniques intended to ensure that residents, elected officials, businesses, and other interested persons and parties have the opportunity to be engaged, provide input and comment on all aspects of transportation planning studies. Techniques could include surveys, workshops, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, web based information and newsletters. Because each planning study is different and because the party or parties most interested in a particular study differ, DUATS will develop and then monitor an individualized plan for engaging citizens for any such study(ies), using an appropriate combination of the techniques above.

**Public Meetings** - DUATS will host a minimum of two (2) public meetings in settings accessible to the public at large with every proposed update to the Long Range Transportation Plan. These

meetings will take place during the required public comment period no more than 45 days and no less than 30 days before the proposed update is being presented to the Policy Committee for adoption. During the comment period, citizens will also be encouraged to comment on the proposed changes by e-mail, fax, or letter. A summary of all public comments received will be provided to the Policy Committee prior to their taking final action.

## COOPERATION

DUATS intends to cooperate in any planning activities between local jurisdictions and/or the public which helps positively shape the future of Macon County. As soon as practical DUATS intends to participate in or create a number of cooperative planning working groups. All of the following focus areas are important to transportation planning and to the community. Some of the following areas of focus are already partially or wholly addressed by an existing group. In instances where a group exists, DUATS will partner with the existing entity rather than attempting to create a new group. If a group does not exist DUATS will facilitate its creation. The groups, as now envisioned, would have the following focus:

**Macon County's Future** - A county wide effort that puts local government, citizens and interested groups at the same table to consider alternative scenarios for the future land use and development of the County and its communities. Through quarterly or timely meetings and possibly through workshops, seminars and presentations held throughout the County, participants will be able to openly discuss factors and possible actions that would improve the County's future quality of life. The information obtained from these sessions would be used to monitor and provide an accountability tool for reviewing the Comprehensive Plan and its various elements. That information would be useful in predicting the impact of various land use and development decisions on economic, social, and environmental factors of interest.

**Access to Jobs** - A working group with a focus on bringing transportation providers into the same environment with job-seekers, employers who are seeking access to a larger pool of workers, workforce development agencies, child care providers and others. Decatur's "central core" neighborhoods would most likely be the first priority. DUATS would need to develop and then maintain interactive, effective relationships with citizens, educational and social services agencies, employers and transportation providers in order to develop and continuously refine this strategy. A couple of potential organizations currently exist.

**Decatur Metro Area Greenway Plan** *(to be discontinued)* - This document was an excellent public participation, involvement and outreach effort to address the need for bicycle and pedestrian-friendly paths and trails throughout the MPA. Both the Greenways Plan and DUATS Bicycle Plan were updated, merged and incorporated into the LRTP. At this time, there is no intent to reproduce either as standalone documents. However, DUATS will continue to cooperate and collaborative planning endeavors with the Decatur Park District, the County, the Villages of Forsyth, Mt. Zion, Decatur Bike Club, League of Illinois Bicyclists and other interested parties in updating and revising the LRTP. Citizen input is an important part of the planning process and

DUATS will facilitate timely activities dedicated solely to bicycle and pedestrian issues which will include surveys, public meetings, and other promotions.

**Transportation Safety & Education** - A concerted focus on education, enforcement, emergency response, and engineering. DUATS will support citizens, law enforcement, emergency response, emergency medical and safety personnel in order to provide education related to safety issues. Relying on their respective expertise and input will be consistently sought regarding streets, intersections, crossing, or other transportation segments which pose a safety hazard to one or more transportation modes. This information will be supplied to the Technical Committee for use in ranking projects and/or maintenance areas in the TIP process.

**Water Resources** - A group of citizens and professionals from throughout the region who work together to communicate the importance of a number of water-related issues, ranging from water quality to storm water management to flood plain management. Together, they plan and recommend the implementation of policies and projects focused on water quality, watershed planning, and sustainable development issues for an audience of local government leaders and the consultants who serve them. DUATS will cooperate with citizens and citizen groups by providing technical assistance to them to enable them to voice their perspectives more effectively. This technical assistance includes teaching basic planning concepts to local communities, helping local community residents research issues such as brownfields clean-up, researching best practices to share with community groups, producing maps using GIS software to depict the incidence of problems and opportunities citizens encounter, and providing data from the Census and other sources to help citizens communicate factually and with up-to-date, correct information.

**Community-Based Outreach** - There are several groups of citizens who have historically been under-served. This is in part because they face barriers to access and that other segments of the population may not encounter. To identify these barriers and design appropriate initiatives to remove them, DUATS will work with members of the identified groups, such as persons with disabilities, low-income workers and job-seekers, senior citizens and the Macon County Transportation Partnership seeking solutions to overcoming the barriers.

## **EVALUATION OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

DUATS staff will keep an ongoing computerized tally of the number and relevant demographic and geographic characteristics of citizens who participate in the activities described in this plan. On an annual basis, staff will also prepare a narrative report describing the way and extent to which citizens have impacted plans and project development. Staff will make a report to the Policy Committee and the community at the end of each fiscal year. The report will be available on the DUATS web site and in hard copy format.

DUATS will review this Public Participation Plan at least biannually and make necessary and/or appropriate amendments. Amendments require opportunities for public review and comments. DUATS intends to provide public notice in the newspaper and on its web site summarizing the context and general area(s) in which one or more amendments are proposed and pending. The

notice will be provided at least 30 days prior to any final vote and will invite the public to comment at one or more public meetings, by email or by letter. Notice will be provided in the newspaper, on the web site and physically placed at the following locations.

- ⊙ Decatur Public Library, Reference Desk, 130 North Franklin Street
- ⊙ Economic and Urban Development Department, 3rd Floor, Decatur Civic Center
- ⊙ County Board Office, Room 501, Macon County Office Building, 141 S. Main Street
- ⊙ Forsyth Village Hall, 301 South Route 51
- ⊙ Mt. Zion Village Hall, 400 Main Street
- ⊙ Decatur Public Transit System Administration Building, 555 East Wood
- ⊙ Decatur Park District, District Office, 620 East Riverside Avenue
- ⊙ Senator Severns Transit Center, 353 East William Street
- ⊙ Oreana Public Library, 214 West South Street
- ⊙ Macon County Highway Department, 2405 N. Woodford Street
- ⊙ Barclay Public Library, 220 S. Main Street, Warrensburg

Proposed amendments will be available for viewing on the DUATS website. The address for viewing is: <http://www.ci.decaturnil.us/citygovernment/duats.htm>

## **MEETINGS, OPERATIONS, & ADMINISTRATION OF DUATS**

Public involvement is essential in deciding how federal and state transportation funds allocated to this area for streets, highways and mass transit, and other transportation related projects will be used. For that reason, DUATS has adopted the following steps to ensure the public's ability to participate:

1. All meetings are open to the public. All meetings will be held at places and times convenient to the public. Meeting rooms will be handicapped accessible. Meetings will not be held on legal holidays. Unless public notice indicates otherwise, meetings of the DUATS Technical Committee and Policy Committee will be held on the second Tuesday of each month at 10:30 AM, in the conference room at the Transit Administration Building located at 555 E. Wood Street, Decatur, Illinois. The DUATS Policy Committee meets on an as needed basis, typically on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 10:30 AM.
2. All meetings will be held in accordance with the Illinois Open Meeting Act as referenced in the Illinois Compiled Statutes.
3. A mailing list of parties who are interested in transportation issues will be kept current by DUATS staff. The list may include leaders of business and industry; representatives of local government, public agencies and civic groups; representatives of citizen groups interested in transportation planning; and providers of transportation services (i.e. taxi, private transit, specialized transit, etc.), including transportation employee groups.

4. Copies of all transportation plans, TIP's, UWP's, LRTP's, and any amendments thereto, as well as any programs proposed for adoption will be put on display for public review and comment for at least 30 days, with the exception of TIP amendments which may be adopted after a 14 day comment period. Hard copies will be made available at the Decatur Public Library, City of Decatur's Planning & Building Services Department, Macon County Board Office, Village of Forsyth, Decatur Public Transit Administration Building, Penny Severns Transportation Center, Village of Mt. Zion, Oreana Public Library, Macon County Highway Department, Decatur Park District Administrative Office and at the Barclay Public Library in Warrensburg.
5. Notices concerning the public review and comment period for the aforementioned transportation plans and programs will be published in the *Herald & Review* and *Decatur Tribune* newspaper and by sending notices to any media outlet requesting such notice. Notices will also be available on the DUATS website. Additionally, notice will be sent to all parties whose names appear on the list of those interested in transportation issues.
6. Any written or oral comments received during the public review period will be considered before adoption of the plan or program. If the final version of the plan or program would be significantly different from the draft which was made available for public review, then the revised version will be put on display for public review and comment in accordance with item # 4 above. A summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of these comments will be placed in the final draft of the report.

The following DUATS staff members are available to provide additional information about any aspect of transportation planning.

Joselyn A. Stewart  
Transportation Planner  
Economic & Urban Development Dept.  
# 1 Gary K. Anderson Plaza  
Decatur, Illinois 62523  
Telephone: 217.424.2782  
Fax: (217) 424-2728  
Email: [jastewart@decaturil.gov](mailto:jastewart@decaturil.gov)

Mark L. Smith  
Study Director & Senior Planner  
Economic & Urban Development Dept.  
# 1 Gary K. Anderson Plaza  
Decatur, Illinois 62523  
Telephone: 217.424.2790  
Fax: (217) 450-2326  
Email: [mlsmith@decaturil.gov](mailto:mlsmith@decaturil.gov)

**A POLICY COMMITTEE RESOLUTION  
APPROVING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN  
FOR THE DECATUR METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA**

**WHEREAS**, the Decatur Urbanized Area Transportation Study (DUATS) in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), embraces and employs a proactive policy of engaging and otherwise providing various opportunities for public involvement in the transportation planning process within the Metropolitan Planning Area, and

**WHEREAS**, previously Public Participation Plan (PPP) provisions were contained in the several Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP), and

**WHEREAS**, during the most recent Federal Highway Administration "Planning Review" of the policies, procedures and programming carried and conducted by DUATS, it was suggested that the PPP provisions be removed from the LRTP and subsequently approved, adopted and incorporated as a standalone document,

**WHEREAS**, on April 12, 2011, the DUATS Technical Committee reviewed the Draft PPP, tentatively approved it and recommended to the Policy Committee that said Draft be placed on file for public review and comment, and

**WHEREAS**, on April 12, 2011, the DUATS Policy Committee reviewed said Draft, tentatively approved same and authorized staff to place said Draft on file for public review and comment, and

**WHEREAS**, public notice was provided and the Draft was placed on file for public review and comment in accordance with the approved By-Laws, and

**WHEREAS**, no public comment was received during the public review period and on June 14, 2011, said Technical Committee unanimously recommended that the DUATS Policy Committee approve and adopt said Public Participation Plan as attached herewith,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by said Policy Committee that the Public Participation Plan is hereby approved as presented and attached.

Approved, Adopted and Effective on June 14, 2011.

  
Mike McElroy, Chair  
DUATS Policy Committee