

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



EFFECTIVE
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Executive Summary

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) was created to comply with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B. As a recipient of federal funds, Foothill Transit is committed to acting in accordance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) by ensuring that no customers are discriminated against based on race, color, or national origin, including customers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Foothill Transit is aware that Title VI and Executive Order 12898 address Environmental Justice for communities of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and low-income communities; therefore, all outreach plans consider the needs of all underrepresented communities.

The PPP intends to standardize Foothill Transit's communication methods. It seeks to guide Foothill Transit staff in developing a project-specific outreach plan and utilizing the best outreach methods and techniques to distribute and collect customer information.

This document includes a discussion of many tools and helpful information in creating project-specific outreach plans, including:

- Service area demographics
- Ongoing outreach initiatives
- Public participation methods and techniques
- Inclusion methods for customers with LEP and all other underrepresented communities

This plan is meant to provide best practices; however, outreach methods will be selected based on the type of project and the goals of the outreach being conducted. Additional statutory requirements may need to be met for specific projects under the National Environmental Protection Act and the California Environmental Quality Act.

Introduction

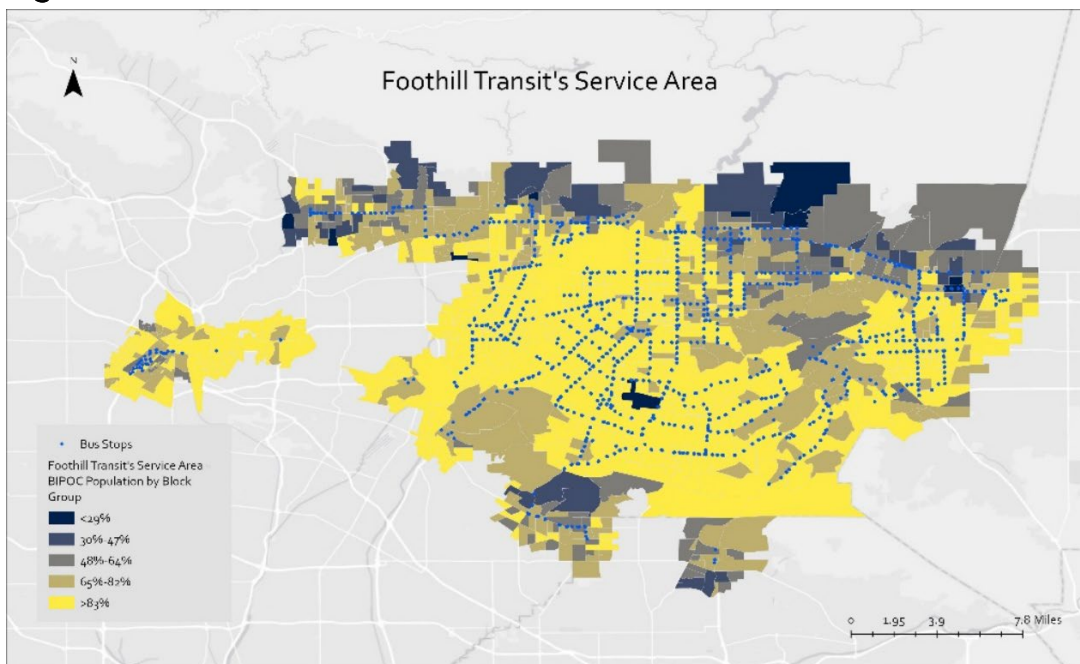
Created in 1987, Foothill Transit is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) governed by 22 member cities in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys, covering over 320 square miles. The 22 member cities of the JPA are Arcadia, Azusa, Baldwin Park, Bradbury, Claremont, Covina, Diamond Bar, Duarte, El Monte, Glendora, Industry, Irwindale, La Puente, La Verne, Monrovia, Pasadena, Pomona, San Dimas, South El Monte, Temple City, Walnut, and West Covina. The JPA also includes the County of Los Angeles, which represents unincorporated areas. Foothill Transit services also extend into San Bernardino and Orange Counties and the City of Los Angeles.

The agency was formed to provide high-quality public transportation in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys. At its inception, Foothill Transit assumed 14 lines previously run by Los Angeles Rapid Transit District (now Los Angeles Metro); fixed-route bus service began in December 1988 with the operation of two lines. The remaining 12 lines were transferred to Foothill Transit over five years. Foothill Transit now operates 36 fixed-route local and express lines covering 327 square miles with 10 million yearly boardings. Foothill Transit's mission is to be the premier public transit provider committed to safety, courtesy, quality, responsiveness, efficiency, and innovation.

Service Area Demographics and Ongoing Outreach Initiatives

Foothill Transit's service area is diverse, covering all demographic scale spectrums (please see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Foothill Transit's Service Area



To meet the diverse needs of its service area, Foothill Transit continuously engages with its customers using a variety of ongoing outreach tools to distribute information and receive feedback:

1. Website and Social Media

Foothill Transit's website, <https://www.foothilltransit.org>, contains information regarding the agency, its history, job opportunities, procurement opportunities, and maps and schedules for each of Foothill Transit's bus lines. The website is available in twenty-one different languages, and customers can download PDF versions of the Bus Book in English, Spanish, and Chinese (traditional). A complementary blog, called Footnotes, is available on the website.

Foothill Transit maintains accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Bluesky, X, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok, and Pinterest. Customers can interact with Foothill Transit via these social media platforms, and if comments or complaints are left on these pages, they are addressed and investigated.

2. Bus Book

The Bus Book includes maps, frequency charts, and everything customers need to know to ride on Foothill Transit —where we go, how to pay the fare, who's eligible for discounts, tips for making trips safe and simple, and more. Each Bus Book contains this information in English, Spanish, and Chinese (traditional).

3. Footnotes

Footnotes is a monthly newsletter distributed to stakeholders within Foothill Transit's service area, including JPA member cities, community partners (such as libraries and recreation centers), local newspapers, and customers. Copies are printed and distributed on the buses and in the Transit Stores. This newsletter addresses many topics, including major detours, Foothill Transit news, updates regarding service changes, and news about upcoming meetings. The newsletter is printed in English and Spanish.

4. Interior Cards and Rider Alert Posters

Interior cards and Rider Alerts are messages that are displayed on the buses. These communicate customer messages regarding safety, fares, service updates, and courtesy. They are printed in English, Spanish, and sometimes Chinese (traditional).

In addition, Foothill Transit donates interior card space to community groups to advertise low to no cost community services and events.

5. Attendance at Local Events

Foothill Transit is represented at various community events throughout the service area, including rideshare and health fairs, to promote transit education and use. Most of Foothill Transit's staff are members of local community service organizations, and/or serve on local Chambers of Commerce boards to contribute to the discussion of transit.

6. School and Senior Center Outreach

Foothill Transit works with local area schools and senior centers to educate about the agency's services. Foothill Transit often works with these organizations to inform the community about bus basics, including how to ride the bus and pay fares. Training with older Americans helps them stay active and keeps them connected to the people and activities they enjoy. In addition, the agency works closely with educators serving students with developmentally delays to offer information, training, and experiential learning field trips. Students learn how to navigate public transportation to help them gain confidence and retain independence.

7. Community Newsletter/CEO's Newsletter

The Community Newsletter is a monthly electronic newsletter distributed to employers, schools, nonprofit organizations, and community members within the Foothill Transit service area. This newsletter addresses a wide range of topics, including Foothill Transit news, updates, tips, reminders, and service information to help our customers and potential customers. The CEO also publishes a monthly newsletter that updates stakeholders on agency projects and community involvement. This newsletter is distributed to over 150 stakeholders, board members, community leaders, businesses, and partner organizations located throughout our service area.

8. Meet the Planner

Meet the Planner is an in-person and/or virtual event that Foothill Transit hosts after every service change. This event helps the Planning Team answer customer questions, comments, or concerns regarding the recent service changes.

9. Toll-Free Helpline and Transit Stores

Foothill Transit has two transit stores where customers can buy monthly passes, ask questions about Foothill Transit, plan a trip, get schedule information, or file complaints and compliments. Foothill Transit also operates a helpline where customers can speak with a live agent to ask questions, plan a trip, get schedule information, or file complaints and compliments. Transit Store representatives can utilize translation services to meet the diverse language needs of Foothill Transit customers. If a representative needs to

refer a customer's comment to a different department, Foothill Transit's policy is to respond to all comments within seven days, if feasible. Signs are also displayed inside the Transit Store to provide information about upcoming public meetings and essential Foothill Transit information. Customers can also send comments or complaints via e-mail, online form, mail, and fax.

10. Rider Alerts by Email and SMS

Foothill Transit customers can register at <https://foothilltransit.rideralerts.com/myStop/AgencyAccount/Register> to receive emails or text messages for the bus lines that they choose as well as system-wide notifications. They can also opt to receive alerts when the next bus is predicted to arrive at a stop of their choice.

11. Print and Digital Advertising

Foothill Transit publishes advertising in local news publications to share information about upcoming public meetings and service or fare information with the community. Print and digital media offered by the publication are utilized based on the goals of our outreach campaign.

Developing a Project-Specific Public Participation Plan

Special projects or planning initiatives may require additional outreach methods. Such projects or plans consider factors such as the type of project, feedback or input desired, and the population affected. This section summarizes the necessary steps to create an appropriate plan based on a project's outreach goals.

1. Identify the project's stakeholders.

Stakeholders could fit several different categories depending on the project, including:

- a) Foothill Transit customers
- b) Foothill Transit potential customers
- c) Individuals or groups affected by a transportation project or action
- d) Individuals or groups that believe they are affected by a transportation project or action
- e) Traditionally underserved and underrepresented communities
- f) Residents of affected geographic areas
- g) Government agencies
- h) Community-based organizations (CBOs) or non-governmental organizations

2. Determine the stakeholders' interests, how the project may affect them, and statutory and regulatory requirements for the project.

3. Outline the project’s outreach goals and objectives.
4. Choose a public participation strategy and public participation technique (s) to achieve them.

There are many ways to engage the community, distribute information, and collect feedback. The appropriate outreach strategy for a particular project or initiative may include only one, many, or all of the following techniques:

Table 1: Strategy 1 -Public Information/Outreach

Method	Goal	Example(s)
Mailing Lists	Mailing lists are used to organize stakeholders. The list can be sorted to reach riders of particular lines, type of stakeholder, or by the city of residence.	Mailing lists can be used to send flyers, advertisements, and emails for focus groups, public meetings or hearings.
Public Information Materials	This technique broadly encompasses and can include anything from legal advertisements, buttons, brochures, magnets, posters, fact sheets, press releases, summaries of reports, or newsletters.	Information materials can be used to advertise meetings or to communicate project details. Examples include take-ones describing a specific project and fliers on the bus promoting a public meeting or service changes.
Video	This technique presents information to the public in a video format.	Examples include informational videos about how to ride the bus or a new project. Videos are also used for storytelling and promotion.
Mass Media	Information is presented through newspapers, radio, television, billboards, mass mailings of brochures, newsletters, and the distribution of fliers.	Collaboration with media outlets, including radio and newspapers, can help promote specific projects and educate Foothill Transit customers. Examples include press releases or videos

Table 2: Strategy 2-Public Input/Engagement

Method	Goal	Example(s)
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Social Media	Social media platforms, including Facebook and X, can be used to inform about upcoming meetings, projects, service changes, or other events. They can also be used as a way for members of the public to leave comments or other types of feedback.	This technique can be used in conjunction with other techniques. Videos, press releases, links to other sites, or pictures can be posted via these platforms to advertise and collect feedback.
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Table 3: Strategy 3-Community-based Public Information/Outreach

Method	Goal	Example(s)
Public Hearing	Before a decision point, a public hearing gathers community comments and representatives from all interested parties for public record. Public notices in newspapers advertise the meeting's time, date, and place.	This technique is used when making policy decisions and major service or fare changes that impact the public. This type of meeting is formal; public members can present their opinions to be formally recorded, but this does not offer a platform for engagement.

Table 4: Strategy 4 -Community-based Public Information/Engagement

Method	Goal	Example(s)

Open House	Informal setting in which people obtain information about a plan or project. Information is presented via displays and with no formal agenda.	This format is useful throughout the planning process and more helpful when considering several options. Community feedback and input can be used to refine alternatives or to determine which option serves the community best.
Open Forum	Expands on a public hearing to include elements of an open house; after reviewing exhibits and talking with the staff, participants can comment on a proposal for the formal public hearing transcript. Requires a formal notice.	This format is helpful throughout the planning process. This method of meeting is more formal than an open house. It can be beneficial for contentious projects or toward the end of a planning process when one alternative is selected.
Focus Groups	This tool is used to gauge public opinion. Focus groups are small format meetings of 8-12 specifically selected participants and are driven by an agenda consisting of 5-6 questions at most. This method is designed to understand public opinions.	This format is used to identify customer concerns, needs, wants, and expectations. It can be used to drive the development of policies, programs, services, or the allocation of resources.
Workshops	Task-oriented meetings are organized around a particular topic or activity. Typically involves around 20-40 people and addresses aspects of a defined topic.	This format can be used to highlight specific aspects of issues during the planning process or project development.

Charrettes	This small group meeting aims to clarify and resolve a problem or issue. Goals and a time limit are set before the start of the charrette.	This format can solve issues in a contentious project or clarify issues within a project or initiative. A benefit of this option is that it enlarges the degree of public involvement and involves the community in problem-solving.
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5. Public Outreach Logistical Considerations

In addition to identifying outreach techniques and methods, other logistics will need to be considered including:

- a) Identifying any accessibility limitations or requirements
- b) Interpretation and translation needs

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Safe Harbor Provision requires Foothill Transit to translate vital documents for limited English proficiency (LEP) populations that make up at least 5% of the service area or 1,000 people, whichever is less. Vital documents include consent and complaint forms, applications, notices of rights, service changes or denials, and information about free language assistance. Foothill Transit defines vital information as content that impacts customer safety or legal rights, including public hearing notices, service changes, materials for vulnerable populations (such as elderly and disabled riders), customer surveys, and Title VI rights information. In some cases, translations may be provided as summaries or supplemented with language assistance notices. Figure 2 summarizes Foothill Transit’s documents, indicating which contain vital information and the languages into which they are translated.

Table 5: Foothill Transit’s Documents

Document Type	Vital Document	Translated Into
Bus Book	Yes, published once a year, containing bus rider basics, fares, and a statement on Title VI	Chinese and Spanish
Footnotes	No; issued once a month.	English and Spanish

Bus Interior Cards	No; issued once a month	Chinese and Spanish
Transit Store Postings	No; contains information about upcoming public meetings and essential Foothill Transit information	English, Spanish, and Chinese. A poster regarding phone translation services is translated into all languages that meet the Safe Harbor threshold
Detour Notices	Yes; signs are posted at bus stops to indicate closure or re-routing	Chinese and Spanish
Website	Yes; contains information regarding the agency, its history, job opportunities, procurement opportunities, and maps and schedules for each of Foothill Transit's bus lines	All languages that meet the Safe Harbor threshold
Social Media/ Rider alerts	No; E-alerts contain service alerts such as delays, construction, and detour information.	English, Spanish and Chinese in occasion
Transit Stores/ Helpline (Oral)	No; Customers can buy monthly passes, ask questions about Foothill Transit, plan a trip, get schedule information, or file complaints and compliments	Some bilingual CSRs (Spanish/English) on-site; Telephone translation services allow CSRs to communicate in more than 200 languages.
Community Meetings	Yes; meetings allow customers to provide input on Foothill Transit's service.	Chinese and Spanish; additional languages as needed

Board Meetings	Yes; meetings cover all Executive Board actions and decisions.	A translator can be requested; Notification of how to request translation is posted on each board agenda.
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Foothill Transit identifies 12 languages that meet Safe Harbor requirements: English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin), Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, Japanese, Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian, Persian, and Thai. Because Spanish and Chinese are the most commonly spoken languages among riders, they are prioritized for translation. However, all vital documents or their summaries are translated into all 12 languages, with additional translations provided as needed. To further support accessibility, telephone interpretation services are available to assist customers in a wide range of languages for both in-person and phone inquiries.

- c) Cost and resource limitations
- d) Cultural considerations aside from language

Assessment of Public Participation Plan

This document is necessarily a "work in progress" and cannot, by definition, be considered finished. The tools and techniques used to reach the public are updated and evaluated regularly for effectiveness. Many of the tools listed continually change as new technology and tools become available for disseminating information to the public.