



# Every Place Counts Leadership Academy

TRANSPORTATION TOOLKIT QUICK GUIDE



LEARN • ENGAGE • MAKE A DIFFERENCE

 U.S. Department of Transportation

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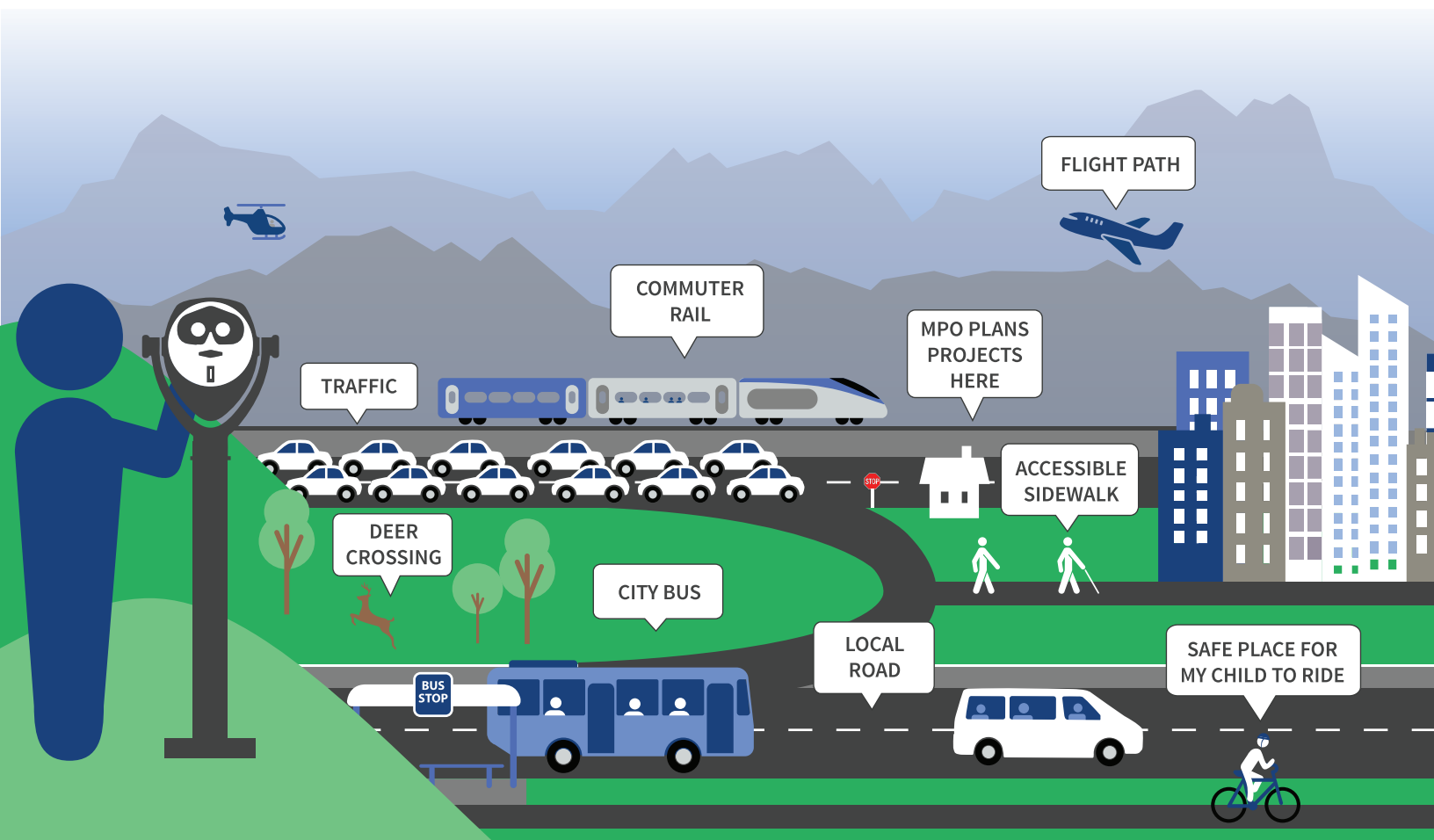
*Do you have a transportation idea, problem or challenge?  
Do you want to participate in the process of making decisions  
about transportation plans and projects? Do you currently  
have little to no experience with these types of decisions?*

***Then the Toolkit is for you!***



## **This Toolkit will help you learn how to:**

- Get involved in a meaningful way in the process of making transportation decisions in your community, region and state**
- Take a proactive approach to improving transportation in your community**
- Get involved early and often**
- Learn who to contact and when**
- Understand how transportation is planned, funded, designed, built and maintained**
- Find answers to common transportation questions**



**PART 1:**

# An Introduction to Transportation

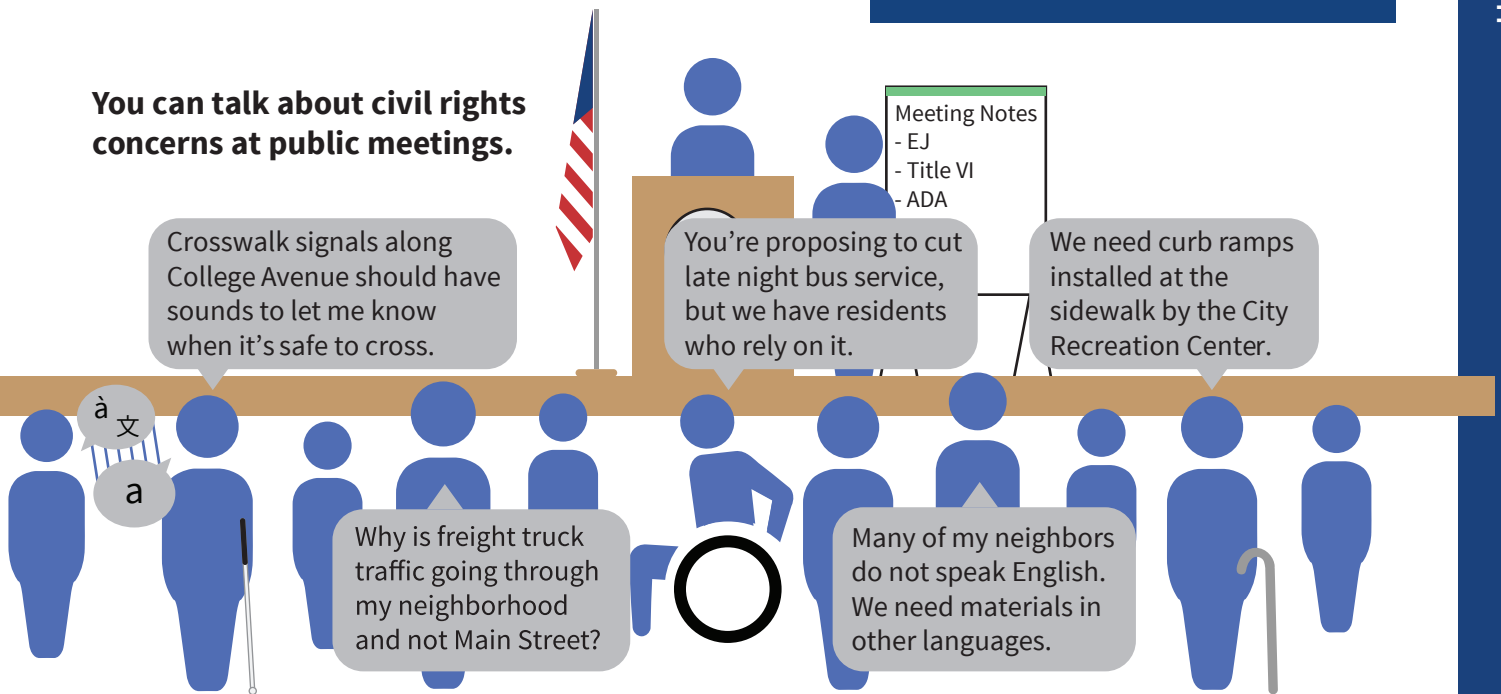
## What's in this section?

- When and why you should get involved in transportation decisions
- How we used to make transportation decisions
- What is public involvement
- What to do if you don't get the outcome you want
- What should you know about civil rights: Title VI, Environmental Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA)

## Terms to Know

- Decide-announce-defend
- Disparate impact
- Disparate treatment
- Equitable development
- Goods
- Infrastructure
- Transit agency
- Transportation system
- Underrepresented
- Underserved
- Underrepresented

### You can talk about civil rights concerns at public meetings.






## What if you don't get the outcome you want?

Here are a few reasons that public involvement may not result in the outcome you want or expect:

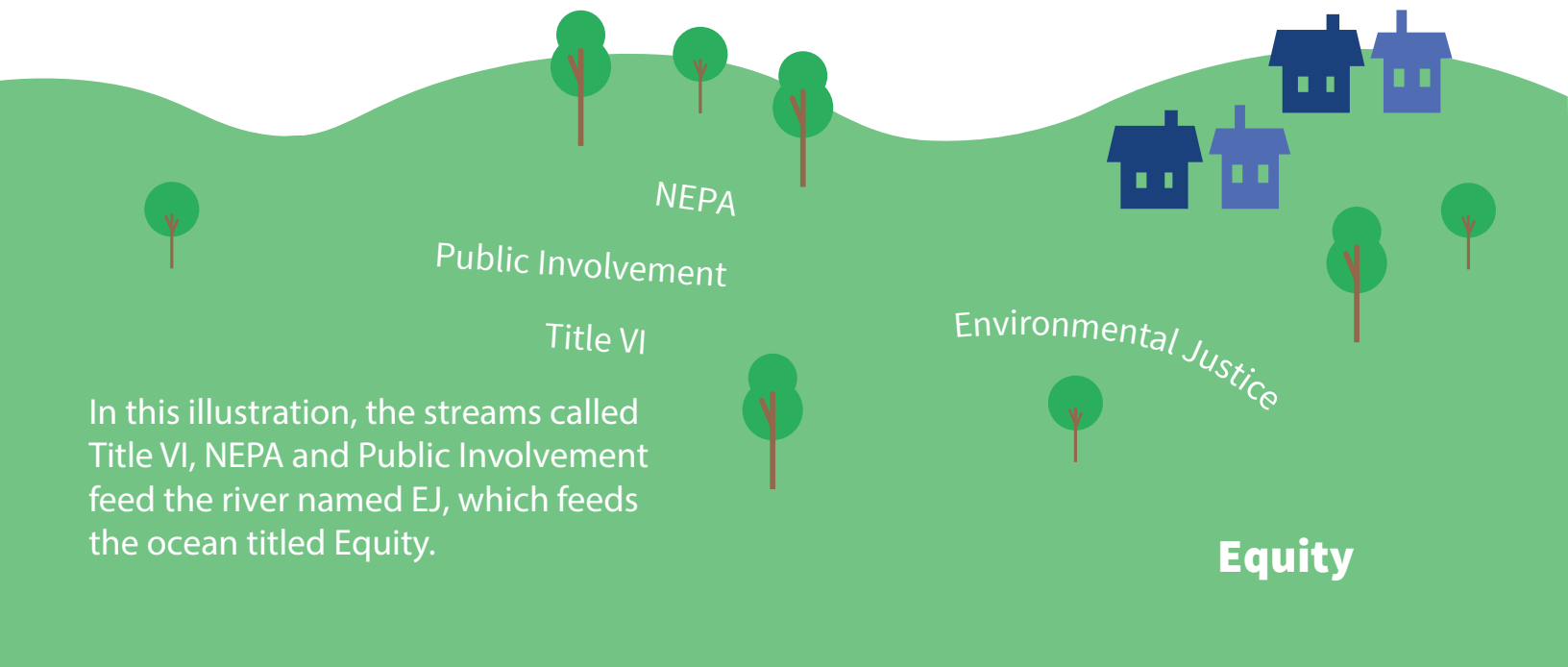
- There is not enough money to fund all possible projects.
- The idea will have a negative impact on the environment, an aspect of the project or another community.
- The idea may cause safety risks.

When the process does not yield the result you want, speak to the planner, the project manager or the public involvement representative at the transportation agency and your elected leaders to better understand why the decision was made and how you can be involved in the next project or plan.

# How do ADA, EJ, and Title VI help you get involved?

	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Title VI	Environmental Justice (EJ)
<b>Who must follow?</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State and local governments</li> <li>• All public organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State and local governments that receive grants or other assistance from federal agencies</li> <li>• Governmental organizations that receive federal assistance</li> <li>• Any organization that receive federal assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal agencies</li> </ul>
<b>What are agencies required to provide?</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible buildings, buses, trains, sidewalks, and more</li> <li>• When agencies provide transportation options, they must be accessible for persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title VI Plan</li> <li>• Notice to the public</li> <li>• Translation and interpreters for persons who are limited English proficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful public participation</li> <li>• Adopt the DOT EJ Guiding Principles (see pg. 83)</li> </ul>
<b>Where can you get involved?</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At public meetings for new projects</li> <li>• Through state or local disability councils</li> <li>• By filing a complaint with a local, state or federal agency if something is not accessible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At public meetings when governmental organizations do transportation planning</li> <li>• At public meetings during the NEPA process for a project</li> <li>• By filing a complaint with a local, state or federal agency if you feel that a project discriminates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At public meetings for projects affecting your community</li> </ul>

## EJ/Title VI Streams



# The Process of Making Transportation Decisions

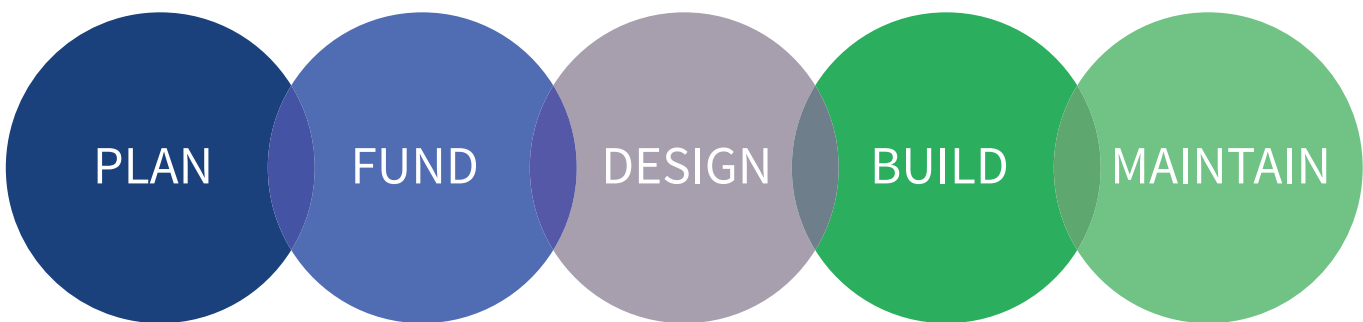
## What's in this section?

- An overview of the five steps in the transportation decision-making process
  - Plan: How decisions are made about which projects will get built in the future
  - Fund: How transportation is funded and financed
  - Design: How ideas are turned into transportation projects
  - Build: How transportation projects are built
  - Maintain: How the transportation system is kept in working order

## Terms to Know

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Highway Trust Fund (HTF)
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)
- State Department of Transportation (State DOT)
- State Rail Plan (SRP)
- State Rail Transportation Authority (SRTA)
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

**Part 2 shows you the transportation decision-making process in five basic steps. These will help you understand what activities and decisions help move a project from an idea to a reality. You can find out who manages each step and how you can get involved.**

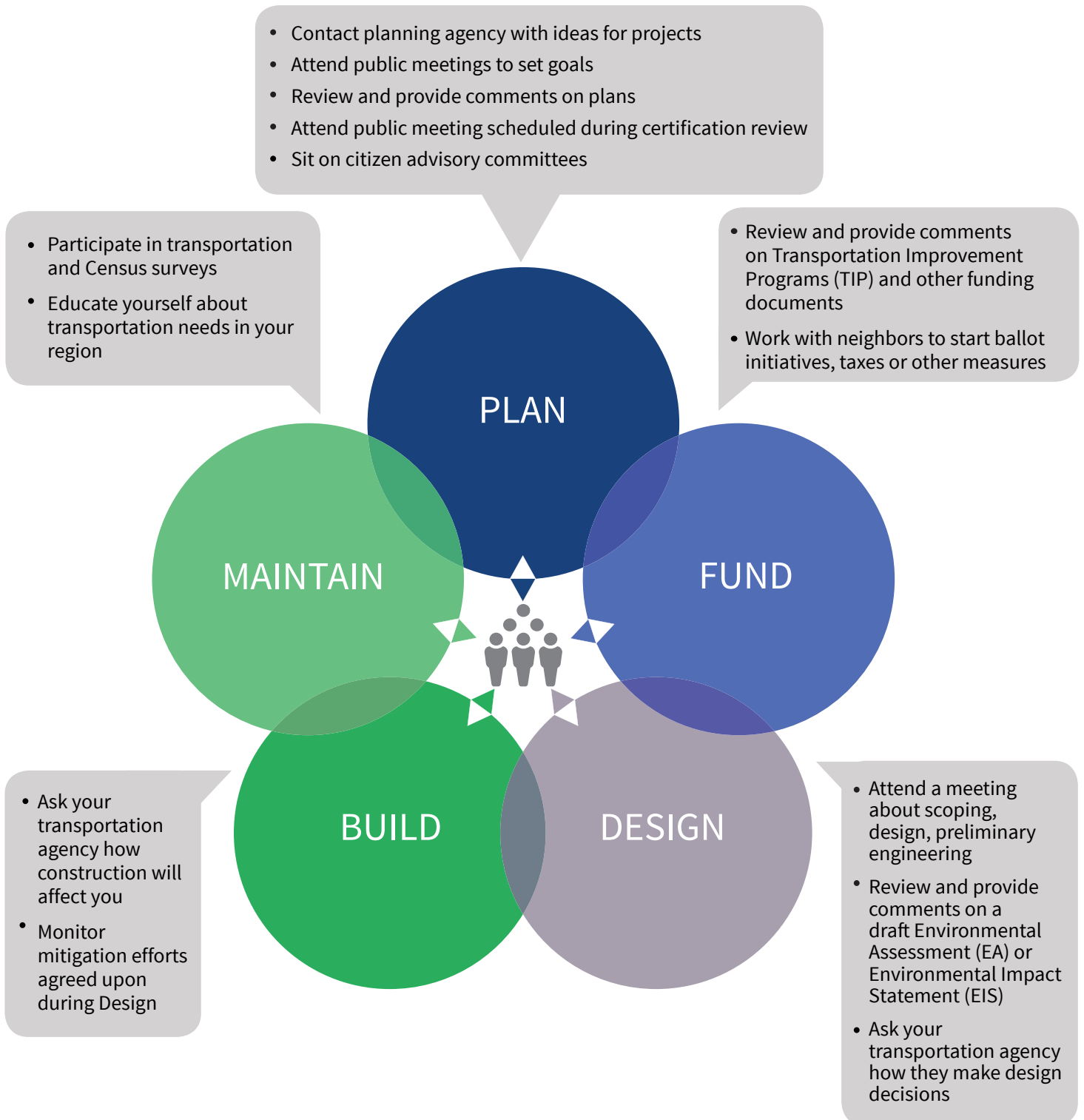


# Opportunities to Influence Transportation Decisions



Transportation agencies are required to provide public involvement opportunities and reach out to people like you. But you don't have to wait for them to take the first step. Here are some ways that you can influence transportation decisions at each step of the process.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.**



PART 3:

# Some Common Transportation Scenarios

## What do you need to know to get involved?

- Who should you contact?
- What types of information will you need?
- When should you get involved?
- What considerations should you have?

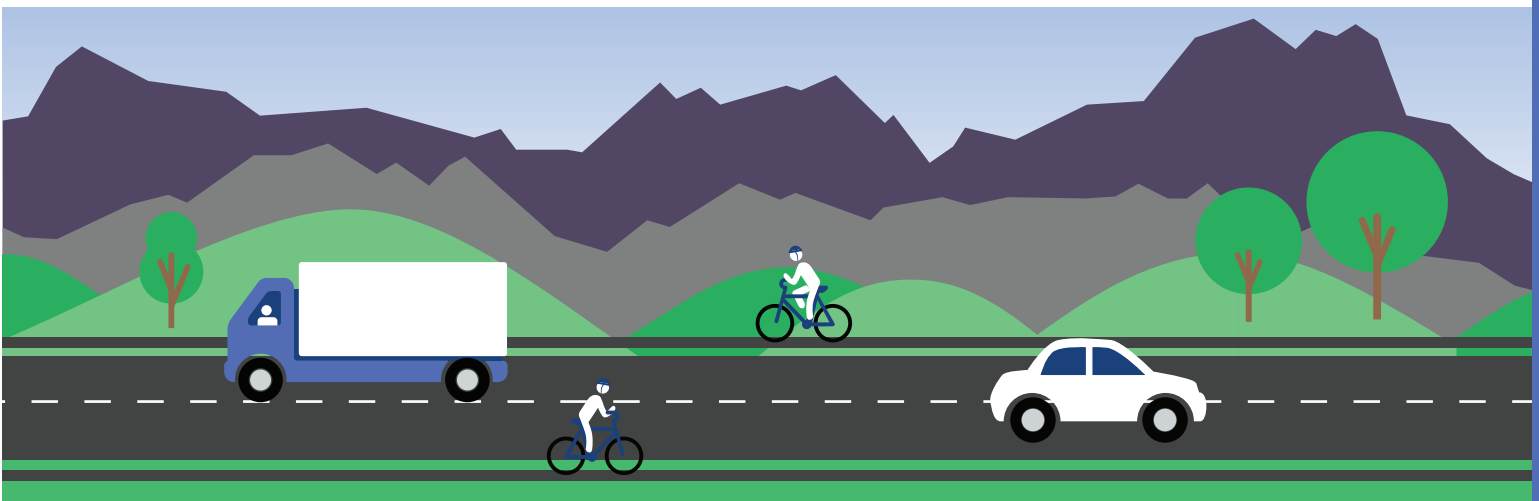
## Scenarios

This section features four common transportation scenarios that can help you learn how to solve the types of issues you may face in your community.

- How to express your needs about a road project
- How to make your case for moving or adding a bus stop
- How to provide input on an airport runway construction project
- How to work to make a rail crossing safer

## Some examples of decisions made about roads:

- Constructing a new road
- Reconstruct a road to add or remove lanes
- Resurface, restore, rehabilitate or preserve a road
- Maintain a road



## Not sure who owns or maintains a road?

The signs you see on the side of that road may help you find the answer.



Interstate Highway



U.S. Highway



State Highway



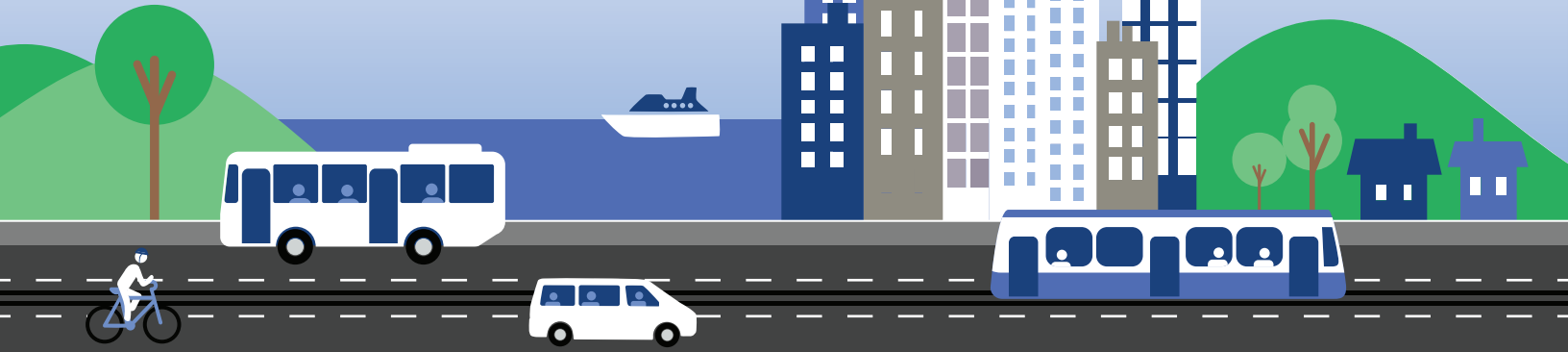
County Highway/Road



Local Road/Street

## Some examples of decisions made about transit:

- Location and design of bus stops and train stations
- Hours of transit service
- New bus routes or route changes
- Cost of transit fares



## Some examples of decisions made about aviation:

- Flight paths
- Noise: voluntary noise abatement procedures (FAA, Airline, Airport decision)
- Airport or runway construction or repair

\*Individual airports can propose mandatory restrictions on noise, subject to approval by FAA.



## Some examples of decisions made about rail:

- Location, design and construction of high-speed passenger rail alignment and stations
- Location of rail crossings
- Maintenance of rail crossings
- Designation of quiet zones





PART 4:

# Becoming a Transportation Leader in Your Community

## What's in this section?

- You are an emerging transportation leader
- How to add value to the process: getting heard
- How to make your case
- How you can get involved in transportation
- decision-making

## Ways to get involved

- Stay informed
- Attend public meetings
- Talk with decision-makers
- Work with your neighbors
- Join a group
- Serve on a committee
- Submit comments to the official record

## How to make your case

- Put yourself in the shoes of the person or group responsible for making a final decision
- Find data and facts to support your request
- Collaborate with others who are interested in the same issue
- Pick the right place and time
- Decide whether to change your tactics





## How You Can Get Involved in Transportation Decision-making



### Stay informed

Pay attention to stories about transportation in the newspaper, on the radio and on television. Sign up to receive newsletters — U.S. Postal Mail and e-mail — from local and state agencies and community based organizations that focus on transportation. Like or follow transportation-related pages on social media.

### Work with your neighbors

Find out if anyone in your neighborhood is interested in the same transportation issue(s) as you. Reach out to your neighborhood association and local civic organizations.



### Attend public meetings

Transportation agencies hold regular and special meetings to inform the public about plans and projects and to hear public comments via breakout sessions, open forum or timed statements. You can find out about these meetings in the local paper and on the websites of these agencies, or by picking up a flier at a library. The agenda can help you figure out what may be decided at the meeting, such as alternatives for a transportation project, impacts on the community and the environment, costs and benefits, and potential location and route information.

### Submit comments to the official record

Look for opportunities to speak during formal public hearings. Send a letter or statement.



### Talk with decision-makers

Contact elected officials and staff at your local and state transportation agencies. Ask them for information about current and upcoming plans and projects, how to get your ideas on the agenda, and how you can get involved.

### Join a group

Look for groups that match your interest(s), whether that is a specific transportation plan or project, or broader transportation policy or funding issues.



### Serve on a committee

Find out how to apply for or be appointed to an advisory group, commission or committee on an issue you care about. Local transportation agencies often have citizen advisory groups, as well as groups that focus on the needs of transit riders, people with disabilities, young people and older Americans.

# ILLUSTRATED GLOSSARY

Here are some words and terms people use to talk about the process of making transportation decisions (Plan, Fund, Design, Build, Maintain).

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):** NEPA requires federal agencies to consider environmental impacts in decision-making, and to include the public in the decision-making process.

**Highway Trust Fund:** This U.S. transportation fund receives money from the federal taxes of 18.3 cents per gallon on gasoline and 24.4 cents per gallon on diesel fuel.

**Infrastructure:** This term refers to all the physical pieces, or framework, of the transportation system.

**Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP):** This plan covers at least 20 years and sets goals and targets for transportation issues. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Regional Transportation Planning Organization or State DOT develops the LRTP. Some MTPs are also called LRTPs.

**Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):** Federal law requires metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to create this plan to include long- and short-range actions the region will take to invest in its transportation system, including roadways, transit, bikeways, walkways and connections between modes.

**Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):** State DOTs develop STIPs, which are short-range, four-year lists of priority transportation projects that are drawn from the long-range transportation plan and include the projects in the MPO TIP.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** The TIP is a short-range, four-year list of priority transportation projects that are drawn from the long-range transportation plan and help the region achieve its goals and targets. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) develops the TIP.

**Transportation Planning:** This is the process that transportation agencies use with members of the public and other interested organizations to identify transportation policies, goals and projects to prepare for future needs to move people and goods.

## Who's Who?

**Airport:** Airports may be owned and operated by state, county or municipal units of government, or by independent government authorities.

**Federal agencies:** These organizations work at the national level to develop and implement policies and to distribute federal funding. This toolkit focuses on four agencies: the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):** This is an organization that makes transportation plans and policies at the regional level, with responsibility for making decisions about federal funds.

**Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO):** Similar to MPOs, these organizations are responsible for transportation planning, but in nonmetropolitan areas.

**State Department of Transportation (State DOT):** Each state in the U.S. has a department that is responsible for transportation planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance.

**State Rail Transportation Authority (SRTA):** This group is responsible for setting policy for both freight rail and for intercity and commuter passenger rail within their boundaries.

### How do you contact your...

Local government  
[bit.ly/FindUSMayors](https://bit.ly/FindUSMayors)

Local transit agency  
[bit.ly/LocalTransitlinks](https://bit.ly/LocalTransitlinks)

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)  
[bit.ly/PlanningCapacity](https://bit.ly/PlanningCapacity)

State Department of Transportation (DOT)  
[bit.ly/StateTransportationSites](https://bit.ly/StateTransportationSites)

U.S. DOT agencies [Transportation.gov](https://www.transportation.gov)  
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)  
[bit.ly/FAAoffices](https://bit.ly/FAAoffices)

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)  
[bit.ly/FHWAoffices](https://bit.ly/FHWAoffices)

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)  
[bit.ly/FRAoffices](https://bit.ly/FRAoffices)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)  
[bit.ly/FTAoffices](https://bit.ly/FTAoffices)

Departmental Office of Civil Rights (DOCR)  
[bit.ly/CivilRightsOffice](https://bit.ly/CivilRightsOffice)

This Toolkit is a plain language explanation of the transportation decision-making process for educational and informational purposes.