

# Public Involvement Plan

Transit Development Plan

Major Update FY 2017 - 2026

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**DRAFT**

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# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

## Introduction

Votran, the Volusia County Public Transit System, provides public transit services for the County. As a recipient of Florida Department of Transportation Block Grant funding, Votran, in accordance with Florida Statutes 341.052, must submit a Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update every five years. Votran is currently working on development of its TDP for fiscal years (FY) 2017 – 2026. Legislation also requires that Votran document its public involvement plan to be used in the development of the TDP. Pertinent language from the current TDP rule is provided below.

The TDP preparation process shall include opportunities for public involvement as outlined in a TDP public involvement plan, approved by the Department, or the local Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Public Involvement Plan, approved by both the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration.

-- Florida Rule 14-73.001

Public involvement is an on-going process that involves continuously receiving and accumulating feedback about service. Votran has developed a public involvement plan to be used during this TDP update process. The plan provides numerous opportunities for public involvement as well as involvement on the part of local agencies and organizations. This plan was developed in accordance with the River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization's (TPO) Public Involvement Plan (PIP).

## Overview of Votran Services and Service Area

Votran provides public transit services including fixed route service, complementary paratransit services as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and SunRail feeder route service providing connections to the DeBary SunRail Station. VOTRAN also functions as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), providing services under the Transportation Disadvantaged program, rural trips and agency sponsored trips.

VOTRAN's fixed route system operates approximately fifty-four (54) vehicles during peak hours, providing service on 26 routes. Standard daily service runs from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, with limited fixed route service on Sunday and at night. The transit routes extend approximately 640 directional route miles providing service in a County that is just over 1,200 square miles in size.

Growth patterns within sixteen (16) cities in Volusia County have resulted in several geographical areas of concentrated development and these have influenced the structure of transit routes. A cross county service provides connections between the east and west service areas, and public transit is made available to rural communities located in southeast Volusia and northwest Volusia.

## Public Involvement Plan Approach

Ensuring that appropriate oversight and measures are accounted for during the planning and implementation of the PIP elements is essential to obtaining successful results during the public involvement process. The following processes are intended to ensure appropriate oversight and develop a strategy to fulfill the requirements of the PIP: 1) designate a team of staff to provide oversight and lead

the decision-making process on the strategies, coordination, and performance of the various PIP elements; 2) establish a technical review committee to review and provide insight and guidance to the planning and decision-making process; and 3) adopt a strategic plan of action to effectively engage stakeholders, residents, and others in the TDP development process.

### TDP Project Management Team

The TDP Project Management Team (PMT) will provide oversight and coordinate efforts for the development of this TDP. The PMT will consist of staff from Votran, the River to Sea TPO, and the Consultant Team, led by Tindale Oliver. The individuals on this team have the technical expertise and a sound understanding of the local circumstances to ensure adequate public involvement opportunities are provided.

### Review Committee

A Review Committee (RC) will provide input and guidance into the development of this TDP. The RC will review and comment on the TDP during the development of the mission, goals, objectives, alternatives and implementation program. The RC may have members affiliated with the following: agencies / organizations: River to Sea TPO, Florida Department of Transportation District 5, county and municipal governments, SunRail, Volusia Chamber of Commerce, and CareerSource Flagler Volusia.

### Identification of Agencies and Affected Public

The PIP is essential to develop support for recommendations. A thorough, comprehensive engagement plan with an inclusive strategy that engages, informs, and educates those who will be impacted by the TDP is of utmost importance.

## Public Involvement Process

The public involvement techniques selected for the PIP may be categorized as direct involvement techniques or information distribution techniques. These techniques ensure the active participation of citizens in the community. Table 2.1 demonstrates the public involvement activities and their respective techniques that will be conducted for the TDP. Activities involved in each technique category are discussed in their respective subsections.

**Table 1 – Votran TDP Public Involvement Activities**

Public Participation Activity		TDP PIP
Review Committee Team Meetings		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Engaging the Community	Passenger Surveys	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Stakeholder Interviews	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Discussion Group Workshops	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Public Meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agency Coordination	Regional Coordination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	State & Local Coordination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Official Public Notice/Advertisement <i>(to be conducted by Votran)</i>	Flyers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Newspaper(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meetings/Presentations		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Direct Involvement Techniques

Direct involvement techniques refer to those that engage the public in “hands on” workshops and/or discussion about the project. The direct public involvement techniques to be used for the Votran TDP update involve the following:

- **Project Kickoff Meeting**- A project kickoff meeting will be held with the PMT to discuss the objectives, scope, and milestones of the project.
- **Review Committee Meetings** - The RC will be established to monitor and provide input throughout the study and to evaluate the deliverables. Key project deliverables will be distributed to the RC for review and comment. In addition to the project kick off meeting, two RC meetings will be scheduled and conducted to provide updates and facilitate input.
- **Passenger Surveys** – An on-board survey of fixed-route bus patrons will be conducted to capture demographic, travel behavior, support for proposed routes, and rider satisfaction data from Votran fixed-route bus riders. This information will enable Votran to focus on relevant transit needs and issues. Additionally, a phone survey will be completed of Votran Gold (paratransit service) users regarding current and future transit alternatives and improvements. Survey tools will be translated into other languages as necessary and in accordance with Votran’s Limited English Proficiency Plan.
- **Stakeholder Interviews** – Since the understanding of local conditions should include knowledge of the perceptions and attitudes of community decision-makers and leaders towards transit and its role in the community, up to 10 stakeholder interviews will be conducted as part of the public involvement process. The project team will work with Votran staff to identify and recruit appropriate individuals to interview. The project team will then schedule and conduct the interviews using an interview script that will be developed and submitted to staff for review prior to the first interview. Half of the interviews will be conducted in person unless an interviewee requests the option of participating via a telephone interview due to their schedule needs.
- **Discussion group workshops** - Four discussion group workshops will be held to identify and assess perceptions of transit to help identify issues and opportunities for the transit agency. A discussion group is an excellent tool for revealing the attitudes of a particular group because of the open-ended nature of group discussions. The four discussion group workshops will be held around the County to ensure geographic distribution of the participants. It is anticipated that at least one of the workshops will be conducted using current transit riders to help represent the “user” perspective, and another will consist of members from the business, health, social service, education communities, and local chambers of commerce, to help represent the views of informed “non-users.” The project team will work with the PMT to identify preferred venues for the workshops

## Information Distribution Techniques

The information distribution techniques refer to public information materials that are used to inform the general public of issues regarding the project. Information distribution techniques used for the TDP Update will be coordinated by the PMT and performed by Votran. Information distribution techniques may include the following:

- Notification of General Public – The general public will be notified of public meetings through a number of methods: legal advertisement, Votran website, flyers, and press releases.
- Notification of State and Local Agencies –The TPO, and FDOT will be advised of all public meetings via email. In addition to notifying these agencies of public meetings, project deliverables will also be submitted to them in order to solicit feedback and comments.

## Public Involvement Schedule

A tentative project schedule has been developed for the public participation portions of the Votran TDP Major Update, as shown in Figure 3-1. Please note that dates for specific meetings and public involvement activities are approximate and subject to change pending guidance from the PMT / RC and Votran.

**Table 2- Public Involvement Activities & Tentative Schedule- 2016**

Public Participation Activity	Timeframe
Technical Review Committee Meetings (2)	May and July 2016
Passenger Surveys	May 2016
Stakeholder Interviews (10)	May 2016
Discussion Group Workshop (2) – Round 1	May 2016
Discussion Group Workshop (2) – Round 2	June 2016
Meetings/Presentations (6)	June – August 2016