

# Public Involvement Plan



Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Adopted September 2012

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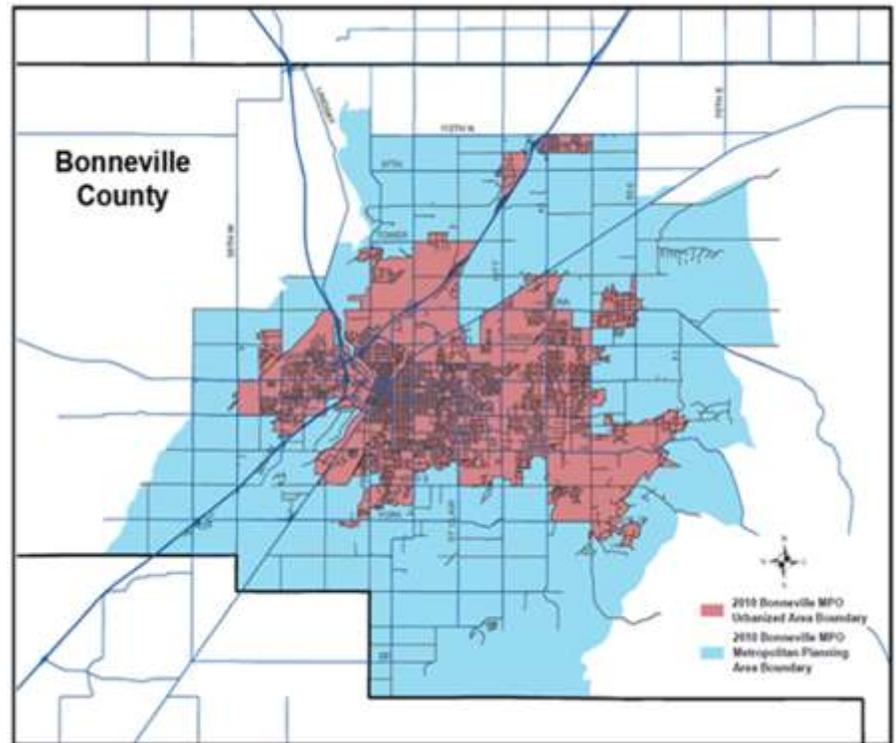
## Executive Summary

The best policy decisions by government are made in the context of public participation. In 1991 the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), and its successor, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA21) of 1998 and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) have continued and strengthened educating and involving the public in transportation planning activities. The mandates of ISTEA, TEA-21, and SAFETEA-LU have encouraged more concerted efforts to develop and maintain comprehensive and effective public outreach programs in accordance with TITLE VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As the years pass, experience fosters greater knowledge of what measures are most effective, and MPO's around the state, and indeed the nation, are working together to share best practices.

## The Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Governor of the State of Idaho designated Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO) in March 1992 as the official metropolitan planning organization for the cities of Ammon, Idaho Falls, Iona, and the urbanized portions of Bonneville County. The participating entities entered into a cooperative agreement that established the means to accomplish a comprehensive transportation planning process by BMPO. In May of 2004, Ucon joined BMPO. The process embraces all modes of transportation in a manner that will serve the State and local communities efficiently and effectively. BMPO is governed by a Policy Board comprised of the elected officials from the participating entities as well as representatives from the local public transportation agency Targhee Regional Public

Transportation Authority (TRPTA) and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD).



## BMPO Committees

The BMPO has three (3) committees dedicated to the development of transportation goals, plans, programs and policies.

Policy Board, whose composition is previously described, ensures that plans and programs submitted by advisory committees are reviewed and, when appropriate, adopted and observed. The Board is responsible for development of policies regarding conditions and needs of the public, directed through the public involvement process.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is comprised of engineers, planners, directors and other employees from planning, public works, parks and recreation and other departments from each of the participating entities and agencies. The TAC is directly responsible for overseeing the technical feasibility of plans and programs. The TAC also reviews public input and makes recommendations to the Board.

Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee is comprised of cycling enthusiasts, walking/running enthusiasts, business owners, city/state officials, school districts, health department and other members within the community who share an interest in bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The goal of the committee is geared toward providing a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities extending from residential communities to key destinations such as: workplaces, schools, recreation areas and commercial centers. The Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee is responsible for prioritizing Transportation Enhancement Projects and making recommendations to the BMPO TAC and Policy Board, as well as, addressing bicycle and pedestrian concerns/issues, and maintaining a current Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.

### **Bonneville MPO Policy on Public Involvement**

The Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO) created this Public Involvement Plan (PIP or Plan) to provide guidelines for establishing and maintaining optimum public involvement with

assessment tools to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Exemplary public involvement begins early in the planning process and continues throughout each of the planning stages, helping to avoid, minimize, and mitigate project impacts while providing the best engineering solutions.

Bonneville MPO staff reviews the plan annually to ensure the planning process provides full and open access to all segments of the Bonneville County population.

The Bonneville MPO's policy on public participation is to create opportunities for all segments of the public to learn and become informed about issues and proposals under its consideration, particularly those affected by the outcomes or with special needs. This policy lays the foundation in ensuring the public is a key player in the planning and decision-making process.

To ensure its public involvement strategies are in line with the current profile and vision of the community, the MPO annually reviews and appropriately updates its public involvement strategies as needed.

### **Federal Requirement for Public Participation**

The public involvement process requirements in 23 CFR450, Section 450.316(b) (1), are listed below. These requirements encourage a pro-active public involvement process and support early and continuing involvement of the public in the planning process.

**Please Note:** Other components of the legislation which support 23CFR450, Section 450.316(b) (1) are:

- 450.212(a) – Public Involvement
- 450.214 – Statewide Transportation Plan
- 450.216 – Statewide transportation improvement program (STIP)
- 450.318(b) – Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process: Major Metropolitan Transportation Investments
- 450.322(c) – Metropolitan Planning Process: Transportation Plan
- 450.324(c) – Transportation Improvement Program: General

### **Major Planning Documents and Programs**

The Bonneville MPO continuously develops and updates several programs and plans associated with transportation alternatives and activities. In exercising its authority to guide the expenditure of federal and state transportation funds, it is critical for its public involvement process to provide complete information, timely public notice, and support continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and programs. All Plans are available by request at the BMPO business office located at 1810 W Broadway, Suite 15, Idaho Falls, ID 83402, telephone (208) 612-8509 or on the BMPO website [www.bmpo.org](http://www.bmpo.org).

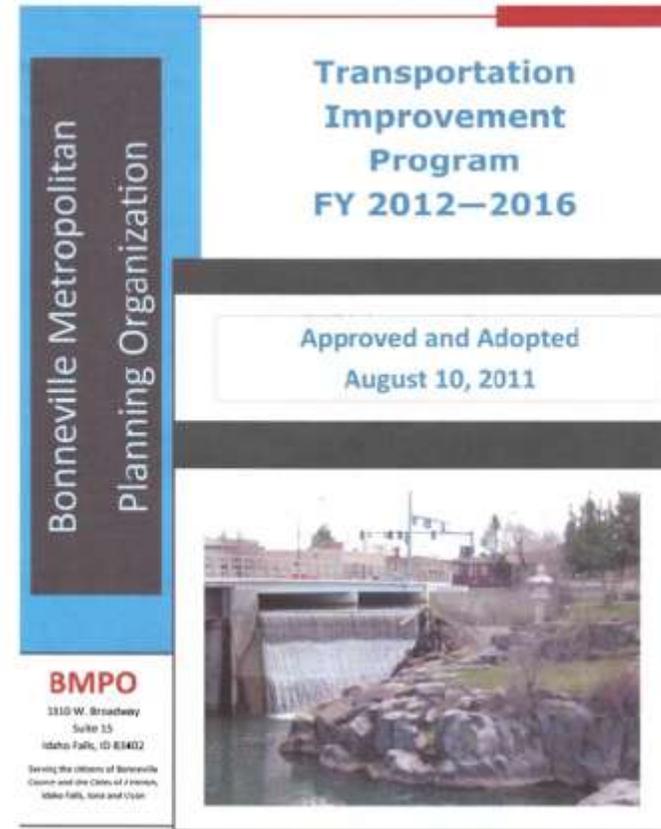
### **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is the Bonneville MPO's principal budgetary document. It describes the planning activities to be undertaken by the MPO for the current year. The UPWP portrays planning activities that consist of current, short term and long term deficiencies and needs focused on economic vitality, environmental protection and transportation safety, accessibility, connectivity, efficiency, and maintenance.

## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a budget document and reflects a short range (five years plus preliminary development) program of transportation projects for the BMPO planning area. All transportation projects that use federal transportation dollars must be shown in the TIP. The TIP schedules the projects identified in the LRTP. The first three years of the TIP constitute an implicit commitment to accomplish the projects with the financial support of local governmental entities/agencies and the community. Projects beyond the initial three-year period are provided for informational purposes, allowing citizens and others to be aware of the proposals and have adequate time to respond. The TIP and projects contained in the TIP must be fiscally constrained.

As a TIP project nears construction, environmental impacts and necessary mitigation measures are determined. During this stage, project design and right-of-way are attained and public transportation service improvements are designed. The sponsor entity/agency is primarily responsible for the public involvement process during this stage of the implementation process. If requested, BMPO may have a limited role.



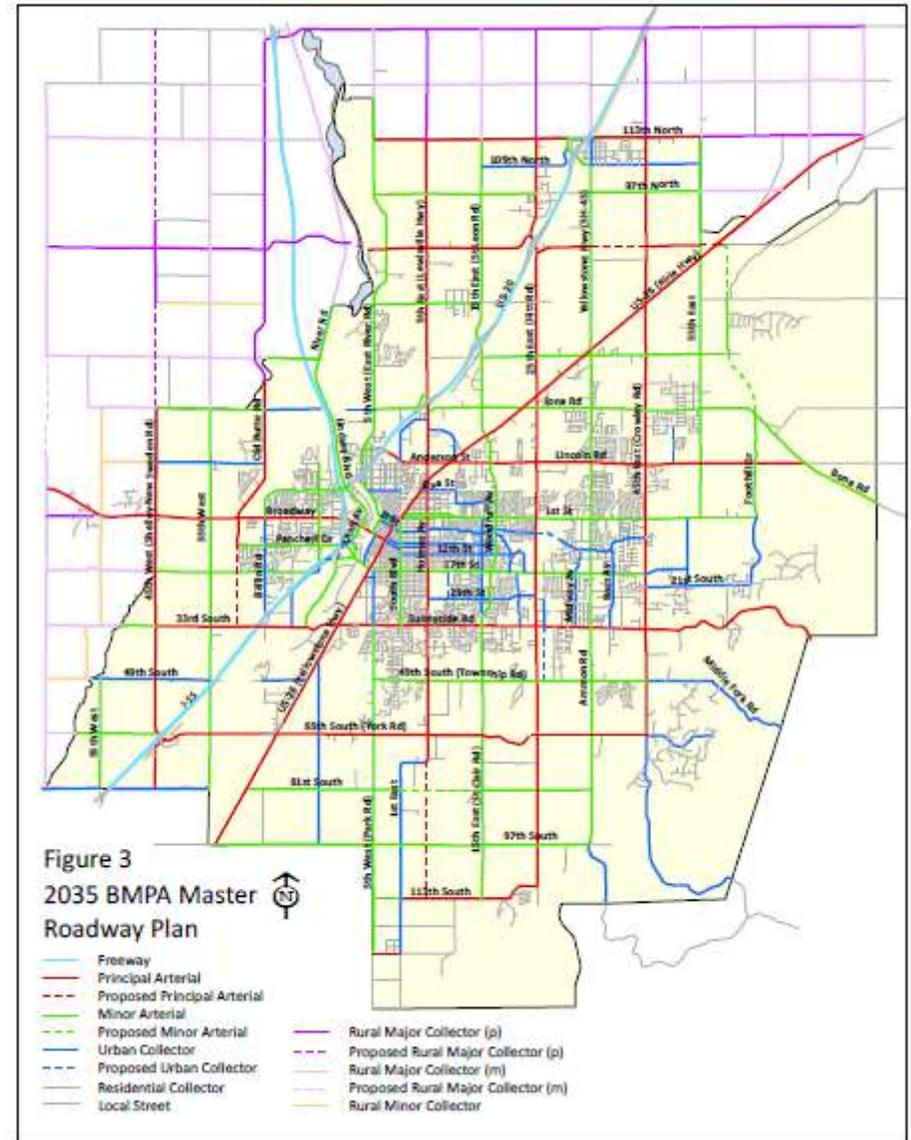
## Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The Long Range Transportation Plan provides a 20-year framework through which local transportation needs can best be met. The process seeks to achieve the best and most realistic balance of transportation alternatives including projects related to public transportation, roadways, bicycling and pedestrian modes of travel.

Long range transportation planning does not display project design, but only general right-of-way needs according to functional classification rather than needs specific to each project. As a project nears the programming stage (approximately five years prior to construction), long range planning needs are followed by more detailed designs. Federal regulations mandate an update to the LRTP at least every four or five years.

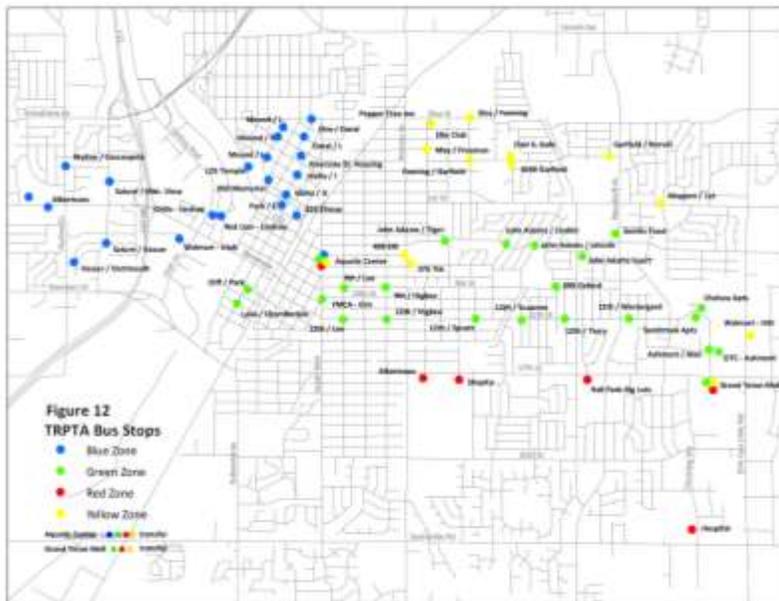
The LRTP can be grouped into four (4) general categories and are subject to public participation and comment:

1. Existing transportation conditions and needs,
2. Projected transportation conditions and needs,
3. Assumptions about land use, population and employment growth, travel patterns, roadway capacity and funding,
4. Project selection and prioritization to meet the projected needs.



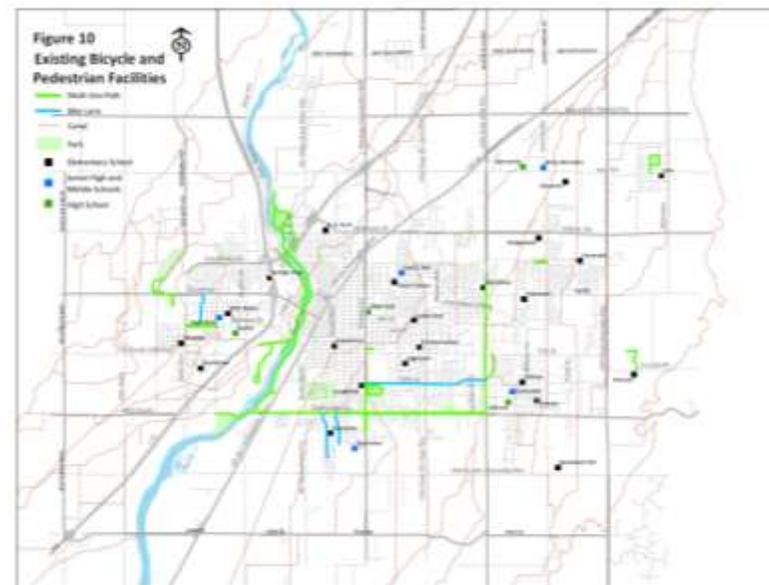
## Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP)

The Short Range Transit Plan provides a plan for developing a safe, efficient, integrated and coordinated transportation system for Bonneville County and the Bonneville Metropolitan planning area. SRTP recommendations are, in part, based on the Comprehensive Land Use Plans for Bonneville County, and the incorporated areas of Ammon, Iona, Idaho Falls, and Ucon. The SRTP will be available for incorporation into the Land Use Plan for all government entities and will become an integral part of a larger, multi-city/county plan to be developed by the Idaho Transportation Department. Every five years, Targhee Regional Public Transportation Authority (TRPTA) and the BMPO jointly develop the SRTP.



## Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was developed to encourage non-motorized transportation by identifying facilities that improve overall conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Plan not only provides the framework necessary for developing physical facilities but also identifies education and encouragement programs to increase social awareness of non-motorized travel. The bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs provide Ammon, Idaho Falls, Iona, Ucon, and portions of Bonneville County with opportunities to use non-motorized forms of travel in a safe and accessible manner. The BMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is updated every five years.



## **Achieving the Best Public Involvement**

### **Existing Strategies**

Federal and state laws require the metropolitan transportation planning process to include proactive public involvement that provides complete information, timely public notice, and full public access to key decisions. A review of the MPO's goals, program and plans in the previous section, it can easily be understood why a collaborative and ongoing public input, process is needed.

BMPO manages public involvement activities for transportation plans and projects through a wide range of methods including but not limited to: advisory committees, public meetings and workshops, workshops on special interest issues, meetings to reach specific communities, neighborhoods or groups of people, transportation fairs, community events, visits to elementary schools, continuous public comment opportunities, media stories and press releases, user satisfaction surveys, displays, periodic mailings including a transportation newsletter, press kits and web pages.

**METHODS:** Methods used to engage the public may include, without limitation:

### **Two-Way Communication and Information Techniques**

Public meetings (workshops, open houses)

- Focus groups
- Meetings with member agency/BMPO technical and advisory committees
- Ad hoc committees and task forces

- Public hearings conducted by member agencies prior to Board adoption, as appropriate and as requested
- Charrettes and other community visioning techniques
- Technical assistance
- Electronic communications (websites, online surveys, blogs, webinars, email, social networking, etc.)
- Coordinate with BMPA entities' Public Information Officers

### **One-Way Communication and Information Techniques**

- Printed materials (fact sheets, newsletters, brochures, issue papers)
- Information Repositories (libraries, member agencies, schools)
- Advertisements
- Newspaper inserts
- News releases
- Electronic communications
- News conferences
- General media (television, radio)

### **Visualization and Interactive Techniques (encouraged)**

- Maps
- Charts and graphs
- Photos and drawings
- Computer-generated images, animation, and simulation

### **Comprehensive Information**

- Meeting dates/sites/agendas for BMPO meetings posted on website
- BMPO Board and standing committee meetings open to the public
- Convenient and accessible meeting locations and times
- Materials supplied in additional/alternative languages and formats, as appropriate and/or requested
- Major documents available on website
- Presentations to organizations identified as stakeholders
- Planning fairs and other joint public meetings held with similar agencies

### **Early Citizen Input**

- Identification of initial planning issues using citizen input
- Comment periods that allow adequate time for involvement/input

### **Timely Public Notice**

- Legal notices
- Media contacts, news releases, and public service announcements
- Paid advertisements/display ads
- Website, e-mail distribution
- Direct mail/postcards

### **Full Public Access to Key Decisions**

- Publication of meeting dates/sites
- Availability of draft documents and informational materials
- Open house meetings or other formats to discuss projects/plans

### **Continuing Involvement and Feedback**

- Stakeholder list of interested groups, businesses, neighborhoods, elected officials, agency staffs, citizens, and under-represented communities
- Ongoing involvement from the BMPO Committees
- Comment periods that allow adequate time for involvement/input
- Summary transcripts of public comments to elected officials prior to their decisions
- Citizen comments, staff recommendations, and Board decisions distributed via news releases, website postings, mass e-mails, newsletters, or other means as necessary
- Use of electronic media and emerging technologies

**COMMENT PERIODS:** BMPO requires each formal public involvement process have a defined public comment period as specified below. The public will be notified of each public comment period as the comment period begins through means outlined in “Timely Public Notice.”

- 1) Transportation Improvement Program
  - Annual public comment period – 30 days
  - Amendment public comment period – 15 days
- 2) Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan
  - Updated every four or five years
  - Public comment period – 30 days
  - Amendment public comment period – 15 days
- 3) [General] Public Hearing
  - Notice for hearing – 15 days prior
- 4) Public Involvement Plan
  - Updated every three years
  - Public comment period – 45 days (per federal regulations, 23 CFR S450,316)
- 5) Amendment Process
  - Notice for amendment – 15 days prior

## **Environment Justice/Title VI**

### **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

This Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 (ADA)**

ADA stipulates involving the community, particularly those with disabilities, in the development and improvement of services including transit routes, rail-

transit planning, highway planning (sidewalks, ramps, street crossings and parking) and facility planning.

## **Executive Order on Environmental Justice, Title 9, US DOT Order**

An order to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health effects or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States.

### **Limited English Proficient (LEP).**

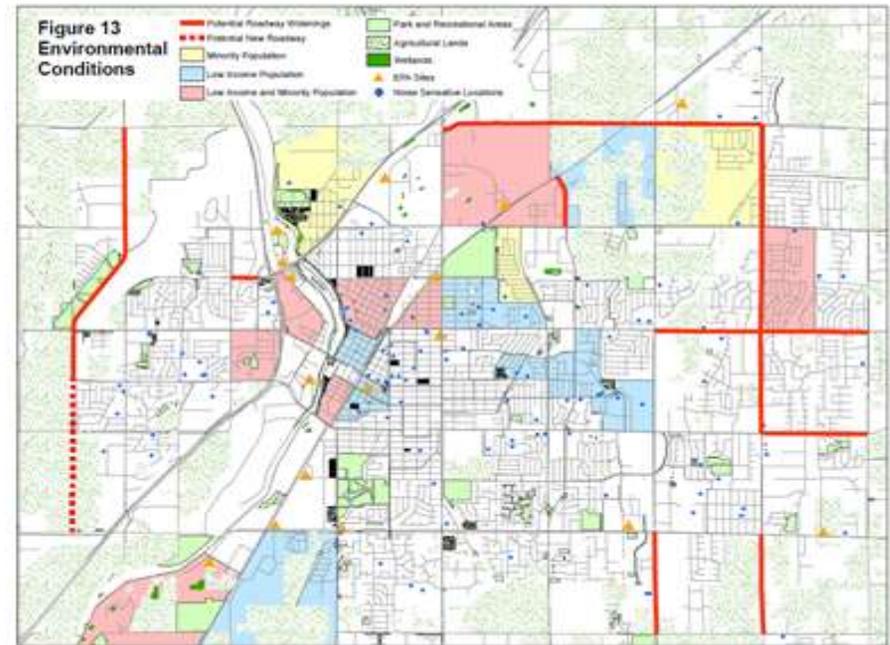
In an effort to reach as many people as possible including the minority/low income, disabled, and Limited English Proficient (LEP), the following strategies for continued involvement for all groups will be addressed:

- Publish public notices for public meetings in the general circulation and regional Spanish speaking newspapers.
- Translate bureaucratic or other documents into other languages and describe why minorities or other groups should be interested in participating.
- Participate with agencies that serve the minority/low income, disabled and LEP by informing them of issues of concern, information on meetings and events, and provide materials with appropriate information.
- Post meeting information and agendas on BMPO website.
- Hold public meetings at convenient times and locations to accommodate all individuals.

### **Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1972 [42 USC § 7401]**

The CAA was signed into law in 1963 and was amended in 1970, 1975, 1977, and 1990. Health-based Federal air quality standards that set the maximum acceptable levels of pollution for outdoor air were the strategic basis of the CAA. The standards were to be met through the application of control technology that would reduce pollutants continuously and result in improved air quality, as measured by air quality monitoring stations.

The CAA requires that State governments develop State Implementation Plans (SIPs), which set out measures to achieve acceptable air quality. Under section 176(c) of the 1990 Amendments to the CAA, Federal agencies may not take actions that do not conform to the SIP for the attainment and maintenance of Federal air quality standards in areas not meeting those standards or that are in maintenance periods for those standards.



### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 Sec. 2 [42 USC § 4321]**

The purposes of this Act are: To declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation; and to establish a Council on Environmental Quality.