



***Lake ~ Sumter
Metropolitan Planning Organization
Public Involvement Plan***

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Forward:

Representatives of Lake County and Sumter County governments, the 14 municipalities of Lake County, one municipality in Sumter County, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) are involved in the transportation planning process facilitated by the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (LSMPO). The MPO's purpose is to provide effective leadership in the initiation and development of transportation plans, programs and strategies.

As the governmental body most directly responsible for the guidance of the transportation planning process, the MPO strives to ensure that the recommendations are in keeping with the goals and standards of the Federal Government, the State, Lake County, Sumter County, and the 15 incorporated jurisdictions. The MPO functions include, but are not limited to, the preparation of the tasks required by state rule or by federal policy.

The MPO's major annual responsibilities are to perform the tasks of preparing the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the annual Prioritization Process for unfunded projects, and the annual MPO Audit Report. As with all transportation planning legislated by federal and state laws, the MPO is responsible for ensuring adequate representation of and compatibility among state, county, and municipal projects in the transportation planning process. This includes consideration of all modes of transportation with respect to various members of the public. For example, the MPO incorporates into its planning efforts the needs of the elderly and handicapped as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As part of the MPO planning process, public involvement is given a major priority. Projects funded through public dollars are to be planned in a manner that encourages public participation and incorporates public comments into planning efforts. As a result, a responsibility is placed on MPOs to develop a plan where the opportunity for public involvement is assured. As part of that plan, a required element is the outlining of the means by which to measure the success of the public involvement activities. By strategizing public involvement techniques and then monitoring and measuring the effectiveness, better planning products emerge that genuinely capture the needs of the public.

Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization
Working Together to Enhance Intermodal Mobility

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LAKE~SUMTER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

RESOLUTION 2006 - ____

**RESOLUTION OF THE LAKE~SUMTER METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) ENDORSING THE PUBLIC
INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization, designated by the Governor of the State of Florida as the body responsible for the urban transportation planning process for the Lake-Sumter Urban area; and

WHEREAS, Florida Statutes 339.175; 23 U.S.C. 134; and 40 U.S.C. 1602(a) (2), 1602(a), and 1604(g) 1 and (1) requires that the urbanized area, as a condition of the receipt of federal capital or operating assistance, have a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process that results in plans and programs consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the urbanized area; and

WHEREAS, a Public Involvement Plan is defined as part of the transportation planning work program which identifies the planning strategies and the planning activities to be undertaken by the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization endorsement of the Public Involvement Plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____,
2006.

Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization

James Yatsuk, Chairman

This _____ day of _____, 2006

Approved as to form and legality:

Sanford A. Minkoff

Objectives of the Public Involvement Plan:

- To make readily available information on the activities of the LSMPO; to provide requested information to the public, government agencies and elected officials in a responsive and timely manner; and to increase public awareness of the LSMPO and its role in transportation.

- To increase public participation in the LSMPO planning process, especially from those segments of the population that are considered to be traditionally underserved; and to increase and enhance the levels of participation by the public in the planning process.

- To explore new and innovative means by which to engage the public on the transportation planning process; to utilize technologies to better communicate with the public; and to establish methods by which public input targets all demographic segments of the community.

- To establish goals and objectives for public involvement activities; to establish monitoring methods in order to analyze public involvement activities; and to establish measures by which the LSMPO may determine the effectiveness of public involvement activities.

Purpose of the Public Involvement Plan:

The LSMPO is a transportation policy-making board comprised of representatives from local government and transportation authorities. The LSMPO is responsible for establishing, according to federal and state laws, a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Lake and Sumter areas.

The purpose of the LSMPO Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to provide a process that ensures opportunities for the public to be involved in all phases of the LSMPO planning process. This is accomplished through the following means:

- Providing complete information about LSMPO activities
- Timely public notification
- Full access to key decisions
- Early and continued involvement in the development of transportation plans and programs
- Outreach programs to stakeholders
- Addressing Title VI provisions

Public Participation means participation in the planning process by people (public) outside the LSMPO staff, committees, and board members. Public therefore refers to general citizens of the LSMPO area, including low-income and minority populations, as well as citizens representing the complete spectrum of community demographics. Public Participation is an organized process of citizens taking part in the transportation planning and decision-making that affects the community.

The LSMPO efforts to secure participation will target individuals, groups, or entities that could significantly be affected by the transportation plan recommendations or could significantly influence implementation. Stakeholders include but are not limited to: the general public; low-income, minority and disabled communities; neighborhood representatives; chambers of commerce; Special transportation interests such as freight shippers, transit users, bicycle and pedestrian organizations; local officials; federal and state transportation agencies.

The LSMPO supports the public's right to have a strong voice in the transportation planning process. Public involvement informs and educates the public about transportation planning and creates an informed community, which in turn leads to better planning. Public involvement also engages the public and encourages meaningful feedback to be incorporated into planning products.

Section I: Public Participation Process

The LSMPO public participation process will provide the public with many opportunities to comment on transportation plans and programs including but not limited to the following:

- 45-day comment period on Long Range Transportation Plans
- Regional Transportation Forum on key issues
- Regional Transportation Summit to gain stakeholder input
- Public Meetings on specific transportation projects
- LSMPO Website: www.LakeSumterMPO.com
- MPO Board and Committee meetings (TAC, CAC, BPAC, TDCB)
- Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process
- Presentations to other governmental bodies (counties and municipalities)

Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 450.316(b)(1), the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process, sets forth the requirements for the public involvement process in conjunction with all aspects of transportation planning. The regulation states that the public involvement process shall provide “complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and the major planning documents” produced by the LSMPO.

Section II: Public Notification

The LSMPO is a relatively new organization and thus has the added responsibility of educating the public on the existence of the LSMPO and how the activities of the LSMPO are of impact to their lives. This education, combined with other activities within the context of the PIP, help make the plan effective. The

following are ongoing activities used by the LSMPO staff to educate the citizens of the LSMPO area:

- Educational brochures for distribution at public offices, agencies, libraries and to post on the LSMPO website: www.LakeSumterMPO.com
- Presentations as requested by citizens groups, public agencies, or local governmental bodies
- Public meetings sponsored by LSMPO member jurisdictions
- Special Efforts for Underserved/Underrepresented
- Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process

Notification of meetings, hearings or other significant events will be provided in the following manner:

- Newspaper publication notifying the public of the opportunity to review documents and provide input will be at least ten days prior to a public hearing. The Public Notice will explain where the public can view information on the proposed transportation plan or program and how they can provide input. For public meetings, as much advanced notice as possible will be provided with a minimum of one (1) week's notice. For any LRTP, the next being the 2030 plan, a 45-day public review period would be advertised.
- Newspaper publication will be one (1) week prior to a meeting of the LSMPO Board and Committees.
- All public notices will be published as block advertisement in the legal section of the Lake Sentinel and the Daily Commercial.
- All public notices will be posted on the LSMPO website: www.LakeSumterMPO.com and the Lake and Sumter County websites: www.lakegovernment.com and <http://sumtercountyfl.gov/>.

The LSMPO will also utilize the following techniques to disseminate information to the public:

- Information regarding meetings and events as well as current document releases will be placed on the LSMPO web site: www.LakeSumterMPO.com
- Email lists to direct mail information to individuals who sign up for this service.
- Direct mailing sent to the public service agencies and institutions with the LSMPO area.
- Direct mailing to select individuals, groups, or organizations that have expressed interest or have made comments at previous meetings.
- Public service announcements
- Press releases for the newspaper or other widely circulated publications.
- Use of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) for citizen outreach and community involvement.
- Informal presentation at regional sites, open houses, round table, or other community forums.
- Formal presentations at various service clubs, civic and professional groups.
- Distribution of information flyers on public transit services.
- Public surveys and comment forms
- Public Media coverage
- Public Involvement Process mailing List
- Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process

Section III: Public Involvement Strategies

The LSMPO reviewed a number of strategies designed to encourage public involvement in the transportation planning process. Described below are the current strategies utilized by the LSMPO to solicit and encourage public

involvement in the transportation planning process. These strategies are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Public Involvement Strategy	Purpose	Elements
Public Workshops and Transportation Forums	Inform public of the nature of regular transportation activities and to solicit public feedback of current processes and procedures	An informal meeting held to educate the public why specific projects are undertaken and how these projects will benefit the citizens and the community at large
Public Hearings	Encourage through public participation, early and continuing public involvement; formally present the plan or project to the public	Generally held at various location through the area prior to the adoption of an LSMPO transportation related work product; public input is used to develop finalized documents
MPO Board	MPO Board meetings open to the public; provide a forum for discussion of transportation plans and programs.	The MPO Board meets on a monthly basis on the forth Wednesday of the month at 2 PM.
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	The TAC consists of professional and technical planners, engineers and other disciplines; created to provide interagency coordination between the MPO, FDOT, Lake County, Sumter County, and local governments; reviews and makes recommendations concerning transportation plans and programs	The TAC meets on the Wednesday prior to the MPO Board meeting at 2 PM.
Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	The CAC is comprised of a diverse group of individuals representing all the local governments in the area in order to encourage a wide range of views and ideas on transportation plans and programs; early involvement in development of the TIP, UPWP and the LRTP.	The CAC meets on the Wednesday prior to the MPO Board meeting at 4 PM.
Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB)	The primary purpose of each TDCB is to assist the LSMPO in identifying local service needs and provides input from the underserved and underrepresented community members in Lake and Sumter Counties.	The TDCB meets quarterly and holds a public hearing annually.
Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)	BPAC consists of members from a broad base of professionals and concerned citizens, whose mission is to advise the LSMPO Board on bicycle and pedestrian issues.	The BPAC meets the Thursday prior to the MPO Board meeting at 3 PM.
Public Involvement Process (PIP) Mailing List	Serves to inform the community of various transportation planning activities undertaken by the LSMPO, such as the LRTP and future workshops and forums.	List includes civic associations, clubs and organizations, municipal governments, newspapers and concerned citizens.
LSMPO Publications	Documents used to inform the general public about the transportation planning activities and projects being accomplished by the MPO.	Includes summary information, newsletters and brochures; also includes summary of LRTP, highlighting the development process.
Public Media coverage	Inform all members of the public, including those traditionally underserved, so that they are aware of hearings and workshops and can provide input on transportation planning issues and the LRTP.	Include use of public access cable TV, advertising in major and local newspapers and direct mailings.
Public Surveys/Comment Forms	To solicit input on various topics concerning the transportation planning process.	Send to members of the public and those traditionally underserved.

LSMPO Website	The Lake-Sumter MPO website provides a forum for cooperative decision making concerning transportation issues throughout the urbanized area of Lake and Sumter counties in Florida.	The LSMPO website includes access to all current and completed work projects of the MPO. Also provides links to information pertaining to transportation planning activities in the Lake and Sumter County.
Special Efforts for Underserved/Underrepresented	Measures taken to involve population segments that are traditional underserved/underrepresented in Lake and Sumter counties, as recommended by the U.S. DOT Title VI requirements.	Focus on geographic locations with a high concentration of underserved and underrepresented.
Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process	To provide the public access to project plans and information regarding potential effects of transportation projects on natural and human environments.	Internet application provides access to project information so the public can formulate commentary about potential sociocultural effects.

Federal regulation requires that the LSMPO evaluate the effectiveness of its PIP on a regular basis. In evaluating its plan the LSMPO may determine to no longer utilize techniques that are deemed ineffective, or to initiate the use of other innovative techniques that provide better response and more positive feedback. All communications will be monitored on a monthly basis throughout the year. Communication effectiveness will ultimately be determined by public, business, agency and media participation during public input sessions, committee meetings, and public events throughout the process. Table 2 provides the guidelines for the evaluation of public involvement techniques identified in the PIP. Additional methods and media outreach to non-English speaking populations will be further explored.

The PIP reflects the LSMPO's commitment to honesty and integrity throughout the planning process and active community participation. The LSMPO looks forward to sharing plan information with the public and interested stakeholders, and creating a dynamic forum for public participation, planning and interagency collaboration.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Table 2

Public Involvement Strategy	Quantitative	Qualitative
Public Workshops and Transportation Forums	Number of attendees Number of comments received Number of comment responses Number of events/opportunities for public involvement	Effectiveness of meeting format Public Understanding of process Quality of feedback obtained Timing of public involvement Meeting convenience: time, place and accessibility Was Public's input used in developing the plan?
Public Hearings	Number of attendees Number of comments received Number of comment responses	Public understanding Meeting convenience: time, place and accessibility Was Public's input used?
MPO Board	Number of meetings Number of attendees Number receiving agendas Number receiving full packets Number of public comments	Effectiveness of meeting format Input is captured and made available for consideration
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	Number of meetings Number of attendees Number receiving agendas Number receiving full packets	Effectiveness of meeting format Input is captured and made available for consideration
Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	Number of meetings Number of attendees Number receiving agendas Number receiving full packets Diversity of representation	Effectiveness of meeting format Input is captured and made available for consideration
Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB)	Number of meetings Number of attendees Number receiving agendas Number receiving full packets	Effectiveness of meeting format Input is captured and made available for consideration
Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)	Number of meetings Number of attendees Number receiving agendas Number receiving full packets	Effectiveness of meeting format Input is captured and made available for consideration
Public Involvement Process (PIP) Mailing List	Number of contacts added Number of groups	How and when contact is made Categorize contacts by area and affiliation
LSMPO Publications	Number of work products distributed including but not limited to: newsletter, TIP, UPWP, LRTP, TDP, TOP, B/P Masterplan	Concise and clear information Effectiveness of news articles Continue items that receive favorable comments and correct or improve mistakes or items that receive negative comments
Public Media coverage	Number of news releases Number of direct mailings Number of public access cable TV spots Number of avenues used to reach audiences Number of attendees survey respondents indicating that they saw a meeting notice and/or project information Amount of positive media coverage	Effectiveness of notification and communication tools How and when contact is made
Public Surveys/Comment Forms	Percentage of meeting attendees who filled out comment forms Number of surveys/comment forms Number of calls Number of letters	Input is captured and made available for consideration
LSMPO Website	Number of visitors Number of comments received	Monitor effectiveness of website format/presentation

	Number of comment responses Number of survey respondents Number of links established Number of documents downloaded	Monitor the use of public involvement tools to increase advertisement of the website
Special Efforts for Underserved/Underrepresented	Number of notices placed in grocery stores, laundromats and places frequented by the traditionally underserved. Number of notices of involvement opportunities and informational materials provided to community leaders. Number of avenues or techniques used to reach underserved/underrepresented	Increase or decrease distribution to more accurately target an area that may be affected
Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process	Provide project and community data	Review summary report containing key recommendations and conclusions for the effects identified

Section IV: Access to Information

The LSMPO will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to technical and policy information relating to the data or content in the development of the transportation plans, programs and projects. Documents will be available for public inspection on the LSMPO web site www.LakeSumterMPO.com and at the office of the LSMPO located at 1616 South 14th Street, Leesburg, FL 34748 during normal business hours. Copies of draft plans and programs for public review will also be placed at the following locations:

- Lake County Public Works, 437 Ardice Ave., Eustis
- Clermont City Hall, 685 West Montrose Blvd., Clermont
- Leesburg Public Library, 204 N. Fifth Avenue, Leesburg
- Lady Lake City Hall, 409 Fennell Blvd., Lady Lake

Section V: Public Involvement Mailing List

The MPO staff maintains and updates a mailing list for the purpose of informing the community about various transportation planning activities undertaken by the MPO. The mailing list includes civic associations, clubs, municipal governments, newspapers, concerned citizens and all attendees to any of the transportation related public meetings held in the LSMPO area. The mailing list is used to inform the community about scheduled TAC, CAC, BPAC, TDCB, and MPO Board meetings; future public workshops and hearings; and to provide brief updates concerning the status and progress of ongoing transportation planning activities and projects.

Section VI. Lake~Sumter MPO Website

The MPO maintains an internet site providing a forum for the most current information on activities and projects, meetings, public hearings, Board meetings; downloadable plans for each citizen to review interactive maps of transportation projects; links to related sites; and several opportunities to provide commentary to the MPO regarding their plans and programs. Archived presentations of MPO and other public meetings are also provided for viewing or download. The website can be accessed at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Section VII: Public Meetings

Public information meetings will be held at various locations in the LSMPO area to inform the public of the planning process and to solicit ideas, input and feedback. The intent of holding public informational meetings at diversified

locations is to solicit broad public comments. General locations of meetings will be at Lake County Administration Building, the Lake Sumter Community College, and other locations such as churches, community centers, etc.

Notice of public hearings and public informational meetings will be given in accordance with and listed in Section II (Public Notification). A reasonable attempt will be made to notify organizations representing minority and disabled people. Public meetings will be held at locations accessible to and at times convenient to minority and disabled residents.

Special arrangements will be made to accommodate persons with disabilities, low income, and people who do not speak English. For meetings involving individuals without transportation and the disabled, the LSMPO will schedule meetings during the time public transit and Para-transit services are operating or will make special arrangements to ensure that individuals have an opportunity to access transportation to the meetings. Interpreters will be provided, when advanced notice is given of the need and an interpreter can be located to accommodate non-English speaking individuals.

Section VIII: Opportunities for Participation

The LSMPO will take a proactive approach to providing the opportunity for the public to be involved early and with continuing involvement in all phases of the planning process. Extensive public notice of public information meetings and hearings will be undertaken as listed in Section II and access to information as listed in Section III. Prior to the beginning of the public participation process, a list of names, addresses, and email addresses of citizens and organizations will be developed that will be contacted on a continued basis to serve as a base of

interested citizens for input and comment. This list will be expanded as additional citizens attend the informational public meetings and make comment. Additionally, meeting agendas for all LSMPO Board and Committee meetings include a public input period.

Section IX: Response to Public Input

Responses to questions and comments from the public concerning the public participation process, draft transportation plans, programs, or public agency consultation process will be made directly to the individual by letter, telephone call or email. A summary analysis and report on disposition of comments will be made as part of the final plan or program. Rationale for policy decisions will be available to the public in writing if requested.

Section X: Advisory Committees

Advisory committees have been formed to advise the LSMPO Board and staff in the preparation and review of public participation plans, transportation plans, programs and other related matters. Each of the LSMPO committees provided its own unique contributions to the development of the LSMPO planning documents.

The **Technical Advisory Committee** (TAC) is comprised of planners and engineers from the various local governments that make up the LSMPO. Therefore, the input provided by the TAC is of a very technical nature. This may include making design recommendations and verifying that all documents conform to the appropriate standards.

The **Citizens Advisory Committee** (CAC) is comprised of interested community members representing the various local governments that make up the LSMPO. This committee has a special advisory role to the LSMPO because it provides a necessary communication link between the LSMPO and the community it serves. The committee also solicits input and recommendations from other citizens groups and interested stakeholders when reviewing transportation plans and programs.

The **Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board** (TDCB) is an advisory group to an MPO on para-transit issues. The LSMPO has two TDCBs under its purview, Lake County's TDCB and Sumter County's TDCB. The TDCB is comprised of various community groups as outlined in Florida Statutes and committee representatives are appointed by the LSMPO Board. The purpose of the TDCB is to develop local service needs and to provide information, advice and direction to the LSMPO Board regarding the coordination of services to be provided to the transportation disadvantaged. As such the TDCB provides a forum for the needs of the transportation disadvantaged to be heard.

The **Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee** (BPAC) consists of members from a broad base of professionals and concerned citizens, whose mission is to advise the LSMPO Board on bicycle and pedestrian issues. Also, BPAC is to assist the LSMPO Board in the formulation of goals and objectives for shaping the urban and rural environments through the effective planning for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The committee also solicits input and recommendations from other citizens groups and interested stakeholders when reviewing transportation plans and programs.

Section XI: Title VI Requirements

The LSMPO will reach out to members of the low income, minority, and disabled communities as part of the transportation planning process to meet the requirements of Title VI and to better serve the community. The LSMPO will conduct socio-economic analysis of communities to determine where concentrations of Title VI groups and issues may exist.

Localized meetings to discuss transportation issues will be held periodically to encourage participation. Public notifications outlined in Section II will be conducted to attempt to get the word out about upcoming meetings and hearings. Citizens that express interest or make comments at a public meeting or hearing will be put on a mailing list to be notified of upcoming meetings. The LSMPO will hold meetings and public hearings during times when public transit and Para-transit services are available for those without transportation or the disabled

Consistent with the USDOT order on environmental justice, special efforts are undertaken to involve population segments that are traditionally underserved and/or underrepresented in Lake and Sumter Counties. These requirements, based on Title VI of the 1964 civil Right's Act, ISTEA, and NEPA, are designed to ensure the interests of minority and low income populations are considered and addressed in all transportation decision making. These efforts may include the following:

- Identify geographic locations with a high concentration of the traditionally underserved and underrepresented;
- Host traditional workshops convenient to these geographic locations;
- Invite community leaders from these geographic locations to participate on CAC and other committees as appropriate;

- Distribute information regarding the transportation planning process and opportunities for public involvement by providing information on public transit.
- Meet with and make presentations to organizations that represent this segment of the population.

Section XII: Plan Amendments

Substantial changes or amendments to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Public Involvement Plan (PIP), or other major studies will be done after the public has been notified of an intent to modify the plan, and only after the public has had 20 days to review and comment on the proposed substantial changes. A significant change would be the addition or deletion of entire projects or major funding changes to projects, but would not include minor financial adjustments or the annual FDOT reconciliation process. Notice, access to information and all public meetings will be in accordance and as listed in this plan.

Section XIII: Follow-up and Continuing Efforts

This document establishes the basic techniques for disseminating the information to the public and engaging the citizens in interactive discussions about the transportation process. LSMPO staff will work to quantify the results of the public involvement efforts and make an annual report to the LSMPO Board. The initial report (anticipated December 2006) will give a summary of public input for the past year, and future reports will compare current results to prior years.

In this way the LSMPO can gauge the effectiveness of the PIP in order to highlight opportunities for improvement. LSMPO staff will track and quantify the following lists of activities in order to better gauge public input in the transportation planning process.

- Attendance and input at public information meetings and public hearings
- Number of organizations and groups to which mailings are sent
- Email list
- Public Involvement Process Mailing List
- Communications received from public whether they use mail, email, and comments at public information meetings or public hearings
- Tracking of presentations given to public groups
- Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process

In addition to these tracking and reporting efforts, the LSMPO staff will continue to research new and innovative ways to further involve the public in the LSMPO transportation planning process.

Section XIV: Summary

The LSMPO recognizes the importance of the public involvement process as a means to inform, educate, and involve citizens in the transportation decisions that impact our daily lives. By involving the public in the planning process early and often, transportation planners are able to ensure that plans and programs are developed in a way that reflects our community values and benefits all segments of the population equally.