Involving the public in the development or revision of public involvement processes helps MPOs and State DOTs identify involvement approaches that work. Techniques for doing this include: distributing easily understood materials explaining why this involvement is important, holding focus groups on the transportation decisionmaking process, brainstorming with the public including members of the public who have not traditionally been involved in transportation decisions, inviting the community to participate in presentations on the short-term and long-term transportation challenges the region or State faces, and making presentations to civic organizations, senior citizens' groups, minority groups, and other public agencies who are stakeholders in transportation decisions (i.e., health and human services departments or economic development departments).

6. Is the State DOT or MPO required to have a 45-day public comment period on revisions to its currently adopted public involvement process?

Yes. The 45-day public comment period also applies to revisions to an adopted public involvement process. Processes adopted before November 23, 1993, must be reviewed and appropriately updated so they are consistent with the joint planning regulations. If the review finds that the previously adopted processes are consistent with the regulations but have not been subjected to the 45-day comment period, the State DOT or MPO must provide a 45-day comment period.

7. How do FHWA and FTA define the "public"?

The ISTEA specifically identifies various segments of the public and the transportation industry that must be given the opportunity to participate, including "citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, other affected employee representatives, private providers of transportation and other interested parties" (e.g., 23 U.S.C. 134(h)). The FHWA and FTA define the public broadly as including all individuals or groups who are potentially affected by transportation decisions. This includes anyone who resides in, has interest in, or does business in a given area which may be affected by transportation decisions. The public includes both individuals and organized groups. In addition, it is important to provide similar opportunities for the participation of all private and public providers of transportation services, including, but not limited to, the trucking and rail freight industries, rail passenger

industry, taxi cab operators, and all conventional and unconventional transit service operators. Finally, those *persons traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems* such as low income or minority households and the elderly should be explicitly encouraged to participate in the public involvement process.

8. How should an agency identify and address the transportation needs of persons and groups who have been traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems?

This presents a formidable challenge to transportation agencies because these individuals and groups often do not have the resources to travel to meetings, an ability to participate in meetings scheduled during their work hours, or an understanding of how or why to get involved in the transportation decisionmaking process.

The identification of these groups and individuals also presents a challenge. Transportation agencies should begin by identifying organized groups including persons with disabilities, minority community groups, ethnic groups and organizations, and Native Americans. Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations" directs Federal agencies to conduct existing programs so as to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse environmental effects on minority, low income, and Native American communities. Techniques and strategies to identify the transportation underserved include: notices in non-English language newspapers; public service announcements on radio stations which tailor their programming to non-English speaking Americans; and fliers and notices on public involvement opportunities distributed to senior citizens' centers, minority neighborhoods, urban housing projects.

Addressing the needs of these groups will require gaining a thorough understanding both of why they have been traditionally underserved and of what their current and future transportation needs are. Continuous interaction between these groups and transportation professionals will be critical to better serving their needs in the future.

9. Who are the public and private providers and users of unconventional transportation services and how should they be included in the public involvement process?

Unconventional mass transportation services include school buses; transportation for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children in Head

Start; and other non-fixed route or unscheduled transportation. Both users and providers are members of the general public. Users of these unconventional transportation services tend to be underserved by the mainstream transportation system, and should be treated as such by the public involvement process. Traditionally, providers of unconventional transportation are social service agencies providing specialized, dedicated transit services (e.g., vans or buses) to fill gaps in the mobility needs of participants in certain public and private programs. These providers should be approached similarly to other public agencies. Their input should be sought out on effective ways to address transportation problems because they have experience in serving many of the traditionally underserved which traditional transportation agencies may not have. Other public and private transportation providers, which may or may not be considered to be "conventional," similarly need to be actively involved in MPO and State transportation decisionmaking. These may include trucking and rail freight carriers, representatives of transportation employees, and representatives of ports and airports. The creation of special committees or advisory groups may provide an organized structure to receive the input of transportation industry groups on an ongoing basis.

10. How do the public involvement requirements for project development and the NEPA process apply to public involvement for major transportation investment studies (MIS)?

An MPO's overall public involvement process should describe the approach to be used to involve the public in any MIS conducted in that metropolitan planning area, regardless of whether the lead agency for the MIS is the MPO itself, the State DOT, or the transit operator. At the start of the interagency consultation, the cooperating agencies need to tailor a specific public involvement strategy for the MIS. The strategy should engage the public in the consideration of the purpose and need for a major investment as well as in the development and evaluation of all alternatives. If the MIS incorporates development of a NEPA document, the public involvement strategy must comply with the public involvement provisions of 23 CFR Part 771 or 40 CFR Part 622.

11. With respect to Federal Lands Agency projects (especially Indian Reservation Roads projects), how can the State DOT and MPO ensure that public involvement has taken place