

Cecil County, Maryland Public Participation Plan

Public participation is vital to Cecil County, Maryland's decisions and activities. Ongoing public involvement brings forth diverse opinions and values which improves work quality and enables Cecil County, Maryland to make informed decisions.

Maryland's Open Meetings Act

Cecil County, Maryland follows the Maryland Open Meetings Act which requires Cecil County, Maryland to hold their meetings in public, to give the public adequate notice of those meetings, and to allow the public to inspect meetings minutes. The Act's goals are to increase the public's faith in government, ensure the accountability of government to the public, and enhance the public's ability to participate effectively in our democracy.

Maryland Public Information Act

Cecil County, Maryland follows the Maryland Public Information Act which grants the people of this State a broad right of access to public records while protecting legitimate governmental interests and the privacy rights of individual citizens.

Public Participation Plan Goals

Cecil County, Maryland public participation goals are as follows:

- Cecil County, Maryland will response in a reasonable and timely manner to requests for public records under the Maryland Public Information Act.
- Encourage public participation.
- Promote opportunities for open dialogue.
- Identify public defined comments that add value.
- Promote goodwill between the public and Cecil County, Maryland.

Title VI Public Participation Activities

Public Participation Plan activities specific to Title VI Plan are as follows:

- Include the Title VI Notice to the Public on Cecil County, Maryland's website.
- Advertise the availability of translation and interpreter services to the public.
- Provide translation and interpreter services in accordance with Title VI plan.
- Connect bilingual staff with members of the public needing assistance.
- Ensure public meetings are accessible to all residents. This includes the use of interpreters when requested or when a need for their use has been identified.
- Public meetings and hearings will be held at a location accessible for individuals with disabilities.

- Efforts will be made to hold public meetings and hearings at a location accessible to public transportation as feasible.
- Notify affected and/or protected groups of public meetings regarding proposed project actions.
- Develop and distribute information on Title VI and other Cecil County, Maryland programs to the general public.
- Provide communication and public outreach in compliance with Title VI
- Encourage input from Title VI communities.
- Continually assess and improve communication strategies to assist people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to ensure they are able to access and understand project materials.
- Best efforts will be made to make accommodations if unexpected events arise interfering with public meetings.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Data

Cecil County, Maryland makes available to the public several sources of GIS data in the form of maps used in the planning process to enhance public understanding of the project.

Public Participation and Consultation Tools

Cecil County, Maryland uses a number of methods to communicate information regarding projects and opportunities for public and stakeholder participation in the planning process. These methods may include, but are not required and not limited to, the following:

- Notices published in the local and regional newspapers.
- Visual presentations.
- Exhibits.
- Local community public meetings.
- Notices and information posted in the local government website.

For language access, please refer to Cecil County's Language Access Plan.

Monitoring and Updating the Public Participation Plan

Public involvement is a dynamic process. Therefore, public involvement techniques will be assessed, evaluated, and possibly revised. As a result, this public involvement plan may also be revised to reflect changes and different communication methods may be used to maintain the intent and integrity of the plan.