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### WHAT IS METROPLAN ORLANDO?

We’re a regional transportation partnership. MetroPlan Orlando is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties. MPOs were created under federal law to direct urban transportation planning and the allocation of federal and state funds. As a regional transportation planning agency, MetroPlan Orlando provides a forum for local elected officials, transportation experts, and members of the community to work together to improve mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors.



## WHAT DO WE DO & HOW DO WE DO IT?

*Our mission is to make Central Florida transportation better.*

MetroPlan Orlando provides leadership in transportation planning throughout Central Florida by engaging the public and fostering effective partnerships. We aim to help create a transportation system that safely and efficiently moves people and goods through various transportation options. We partner with other governments and agencies to support a thriving region that is inviting to visitors and attractive to diverse business interests.

To find out how you can get involved with regional transportation planning or to get more information about MetroPlan Orlando, please:



### Visit us in person

MetroPlan Orlando  
250 S. Orange Ave., Suite 200  
Orlando, FL 32801

Attend and make a public comment at a meeting.



### Invite us to speak

You can ask us to meet with your group or attend your community event to talk about transportation.



### Sign up to receive updates

Stay informed on the latest transportation information by signing up to receive periodic MetroPlan Orlando emails:  
MetroPlanOrlando.gov/EmailSignUp

Contact us via email at:  
Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov



### Follow us on social media

Facebook: @MetroPlanOrlando  
X: @MetroPlan\_Orl  
LinkedIn: MetroPlan Orlando  
YouTube: @MetroPlan\_Orlando

Get the latest transportation industry information from our social channels.



### Give us a call

(407) 481-5672, ext. 305

Call our office to provide comments or to request information.



### Visit us online

MetroPlanOrlando.gov

Find a wealth of information on our website, such as transportation plans, safety trends, meeting dates and agendas, details on how to attend meetings virtually, and other resources. Sign up to receive the latest transportation news, and find out how to contact us.



## WHY DO WE HAVE A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN?

*Because you deserve a voice in shaping Central Florida's transportation system.*

MetroPlan Orlando recognizes that inclusive public involvement is essential to the planning process. It improves decision-making, strengthens community partnerships, and provides traditionally underserved populations with opportunities to learn about and influence the ways transportation affects their lives.

This plan includes objectives, strategies, and measurement tools for the organization's public participation program. By directing its efforts through this structure, MetroPlan Orlando provides a proactive approach to education and input in the planning process and uses visualization techniques to ensure content is clear, concise, and easy to understand. The organization also relies on its website, MetroPlanOrlando.gov, to provide easy access to information – including (but not limited to) activities, plans, and upcoming meetings.

## HOW DOES THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN GET APPROVED?



To ensure all interested persons in Central Florida have the opportunity to offer input, MetroPlan Orlando provides a 45-day public comment period, during which the draft Public Participation Plan is available on our website and in print. An email notification of the comment period is sent to a database of people interested in transportation in the region. The draft plan is distributed in print and electronically to board and committee members for review.



The public feedback may be used to make changes to the plan before it is approved. Once the feedback is incorporated and the plan is approved by the MetroPlan Orlando Board, it is posted on MetroPlanOrlando.gov. Those persons who want a printed copy of either the draft or approved plan may request it by calling the Community Outreach Strategist at 407-481-5672, ext. 305.



This plan was posted March 15, 2024, reviewed by advisory committees in April and May 2024, and approved by the MetroPlan Orlando Board at its May 8, 2024 meeting. This version makes a variety of updates that focus on equity in transportation by incorporating meaningful public involvement strategies that seek full representation from the community, enhancing in-person engagement techniques and using digital platforms like the updated MetroPlanOrlando.gov website and additional social media channels to inform and reach out to the public, expand access and bring awareness to initiatives, programs and partnerships.



## WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

*We have two broad goals that guide us.*

MetroPlan Orlando invites community participants to provide input on the region's needs and priorities and helps them find ways to be part of the solution to transportation issues. We seek broad diversity of thought in setting priorities for the three-county area – especially among people who have not been represented adequately in the past.

These overall goals for public participation guide MetroPlan Orlando in establishing consistent, effective community outreach practices. They also help the region's residents know what to expect from their metropolitan planning organization.

The goals of the MetroPlan Orlando Public Participation Plan are to:



### GOAL 1

Encourage two-way communication with the community by informing members of the public about relevant transportation issues and ensure they have a voice in the transportation planning process.



### GOAL 2

Consistently reach out to and get input from members of the public across the region who are not easily engaged due to a variety of factors such as transportation barriers, age, ability, language, lack of financial resources or access to technology.



## HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING?

*There are many ways to get involved; choose what works for you.*



**Learn about transportation.** All MetroPlan Orlando Board and committee meetings are open to the public with the option to join virtually. We also sometimes hold public meetings to discuss certain plans or projects. The organization has a comprehensive calendar, which is updated continuously and will reflect the latest information – including meetings that may have been scheduled on short notice or to address an emergency situation. Most of our meetings are livestreamed and archived on our YouTube channel.



**Let us know if you need help to participate.** MetroPlan Orlando will make accommodations at no cost for persons with disabilities or persons requiring alternative language services who desire to participate in a MetroPlan Orlando event. People wanting to arrange for accommodations should call (407) 481-5672 at least three business days prior to the event.





**Voice your opinion.** Every meeting has time set aside for public comments, and staff members can assist with the procedure for speaking during those times. Virtual attendees are invited to speak during meetings, as well as those attending in person. When we have significant plan changes or are introducing new projects, time may be extended for public comments. Find out more about how to comment at [MetroPlanOrlando.gov](https://MetroPlanOrlando.gov).



**If you cannot attend our meetings, we'll come to yours.** MetroPlan Orlando often provides speakers for community groups. We will do our best to meet all requests for presentations on the region's transportation system. A form to request a speaker is on our website, [MetroPlanOrlando.gov/RequestASpeaker](https://MetroPlanOrlando.gov/RequestASpeaker). This information is also available by mail, email, or phone: 250 S. Orange Ave., Suite 200, Orlando, FL 32801 / [Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov](mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov) / (407) 481-5672, ext. 305.



**Subscribe to our electronic news updates.** MetroPlan Orlando distributes email updates on activities and transportation events several times a year. Visit [MetroPlanOrlando.gov/EmailSignUp](https://MetroPlanOrlando.gov/EmailSignUp) to sign up and receive the latest information from MetroPlan Orlando.

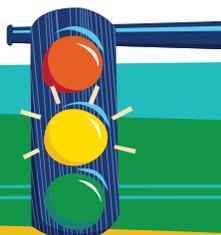


**Follow us on social media.** We are active on  
 Facebook: @MetroPlanOrlando  
 X: @MetroPlan\_Orl  
 LinkedIn: MetroPlan Orlando  
 YouTube: @MetroPlan\_Orlando

Learn more about our social media use and the social media policy that guides it, pages 21-23.



**We have official roles for the public.** There are a limited number of volunteer seats on some of our advisory committees that are open to members of the public. These are publicized on [MetroPlanOrlando.gov](https://MetroPlanOrlando.gov) as they come available and require an application and selection process. (Details on pages 8-10.) For more information, contact us at: [Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov](mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov).



## WHO TAKES PART IN OUR PROCESS?

*Board and committee members, transportation partners, and YOU.*

The public is vital to the planning process, as described by federal law. That means one of the first people to the table when transportation planning is discussed should be YOU. Our board and committee structure is designed to serve the best interests of regional planning by offering consistent input by decision-makers with many points of view. Here's how it works:



### MetroPlan Orlando Board

The MetroPlan Orlando Board meets throughout the year to discuss issues and make decisions about future transportation projects, initiatives and improvements. The board is ultimately responsible for implementing transportation plans in the three-county area.

**WHO'S ON THE BOARD?** Elected officials from Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties and from the largest cities in the region hold seats, along with representatives from area transportation operating agencies. The board includes 22 voting members and six non-voting advisors.

Non-voting advisors include a liaison from the Florida Department of Transportation, a representative from the Kissimmee Gateway Airport, the Orlando Executive Airport and chairpersons of each MetroPlan Orlando advisory committee – except for the Municipal Advisory Committee, which has a voting seat.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** Each of the board's formal agendas includes two public comment periods – one prior to action items and one near the conclusion of the meeting.

**MEETINGS:** The MetroPlan Orlando Board typically meets on the second Wednesday of the month in the MetroPlan Orlando Board Room, 250 S. Orange Ave., Suite 200, Orlando, FL 32801.

All meetings are open to the public, and virtual access is offered. The agenda is available online at <https://metroplanorlando.gov/calendar/category/board-meetings/list/>.

**NOTE:** The board may not meet every month. Dates and times may change due to holidays or other conflicts.



## MetroPlan Orlando Board Designation

The make-up of the MetroPlan Orlando Board, as designated by the Governor of Florida and by regional agreements, includes 22 voting members and 5 non-voting members representing these groups:

### VOTING ADVISORS (22 Total)



County Commissions



Municipal Advisory Committee



City Governments



Transportation Organizations

- Orange County (7)
- Osceola County (1)
- Seminole County (2)
- City of Altamonte Springs (1)
- City of Apopka (1)
- City of Kissimmee (1)
- City of Orlando (2)

- City of Sanford (1)
- City of St. Cloud (1)
- Central Florida Expressway Authority (1)
- LYNX/SunRail (1)
- Greater Orlando Aviation Authority (1)
- Sanford Airport Authority (1)
- MetroPlan Orlando Municipal Advisory Committee (1)

### NON-VOTING ADVISORS (6 Total)



MetroPlan Orlando Advisory Committee

- Community Advisory Committee
- Technical Advisory Committee
- Transportation Systems Management & Operations Advisory Committee.



State Transportation Department

- Florida Department of Transportation
- Kissimmee Gateway Airport
- Orlando Executive Airport



Aviation Partners



### Committee Input to the Board

Throughout the planning process, the MetroPlan Orlando Board receives input and recommendations from its advisory groups.

Committees meet regularly and provide reports, via the chairperson, during a standard agenda item at MetroPlan Orlando Board meetings. This reporting mechanism provides a greater level of assurance that board decisions are technically sound and that they have considered such things as public input, impacts on smaller municipalities, and the needs of all transportation system users. All state Government-in-the-Sunshine requirements regarding public access to government meetings and records are part of the committee structure.



### Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee ensures the public has the opportunity to review and evaluate all proposed transportation policies, plans and programs. About half the Community Advisory Committee members are appointed by local governments, and the other half by the MetroPlan Orlando Board.

**WHO'S ON THE COMMITTEE?** Membership includes multimodal transportation advocates, representatives from underserved communities and business interests. This composition encourages diversity of many kinds, including geographic, demographic, and modal.

The Community Advisory Committee is the main standing advisory committee for which citizens can volunteer. Residents interested in serving on the committee in a MetroPlan Orlando appointed seat will need to fill out an application, which is made available online at [MetroPlanOrlando.gov/CAC](http://MetroPlanOrlando.gov/CAC). Applications are also available by request from our office. For more information, contact MetroPlan Orlando at (407) 481-5672 or email [Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov](mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov).

**MEETINGS:** The committee generally meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month, beginning at 9:30 a.m.





### Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee reviews and evaluates all transportation policies, plans and programs from a technical perspective. The committee makes recommendations to the board, based on these technical considerations, providing an additional perspective to the board prior to decision-making.

**WHO'S ON THE COMMITTEE?** This group is composed of transportation planners and engineers appointed by local governments and the region's transportation operating agencies.

**MEETINGS:** The Technical Advisory Committee generally meets on the fourth Friday of the month, beginning at 10 a.m.



### Transportation Systems Management & Operations Advisory Committee

The Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO) Advisory Committee explores how technology and relatively low-cost improvements can make the most of the existing transportation system. In addition, the committee establishes measures to help improve traffic reliability and safety in Central Florida.

**WHO'S ON THE COMMITTEE?** This group includes planning and engineering experts from federal, state, regional and local agencies. The committee also includes a nonvoting Citizen Advocate. Residents interested in serving on the committee as Citizen Advocate will need to fill out an application, which is made available online when the seat needs to be filled. Applications are also available by request from our office. For more information, contact MetroPlan Orlando at (407) 481-5672 or email [Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov](mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov).

**MEETINGS:** The Transportation Systems Management & Operations Advisory Committee generally meets on the fourth Friday of the month, beginning at 8:30 a.m.





### Municipal Advisory Committee

Due to the limited number of seats on the MetroPlan Orlando Board, only the most populated cities in the three-county area are directly represented on the board. Created by MetroPlan Orlando in 2001, the Municipal Advisory Committee has a vote on the board and ensures smaller cities are represented in decision-making. Statewide, the Municipal Advisory Committee is unique to MetroPlan Orlando.

**WHO'S ON THE COMMITTEE?** Input comes from mayors and council members of cities and towns not directly represented on the board.

**MEETINGS:** The Municipal Advisory Committee generally meets on the Thursday prior to the MetroPlan Orlando Board meeting, beginning at 9:30 a.m.



### Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

As the designated planning agency for the region, MetroPlan Orlando provides staff support to the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB). This board coordinates transportation needs of the disadvantaged in our community, including individuals with physical and economic challenges and senior citizens facing mobility issues. The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board reviews price and service levels, safety concerns, eligibility and other pertinent issues related to the ACCESS LYNX paratransit service in the three-county area.

**WHO'S ON THE TDLCB?** From time to time, seats are available on the TDLCB, which may be limited to certain types of applicants – such as paratransit system users, senior citizens, etc. Interested persons who qualify for these seats will need to fill out an application, which is made available online when vacancies occur. Applications are also available by request from our office. For more information, contact MetroPlanOrlando at (407) 481-5672 or email [Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov](mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov).

**MEETINGS:** The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board meets on the second Thursday of February, May, August, and November, beginning at 10 a.m.



## WHAT ARE METROPLAN ORLANDO'S CORE PLANS?



Metropolitan planning organizations, such as MetroPlan Orlando, are charged in federal law with developing three specific plans: 1) Metropolitan Transportation Plan, 2) Transportation Improvement Program, and 3) Unified Planning Work Program. MetroPlan Orlando also produces a Prioritized Project List, which connects the priorities of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan with those of the Transportation Improvement Program, as required by state law.

For each plan, the outreach process includes: making plan documents available throughout the review process by the MetroPlan Orlando Board and advisory committees; identifying meetings where the plan will appear on the agenda; and inviting public comment, both at meetings and through separate means. All board and committee meetings include opportunities for the public to speak on the plans before they are considered for a vote. Meetings are properly advertised, according to Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine guidelines. Typically, the public has multiple weeks to comment.

In addition, citizens unable to attend committee or board meetings are encouraged to submit written comments via postal service, MetroPlanOrlando.gov contact form, or email at Comment@MetroPlanOrlando.gov.

The most prominent tools for sharing information and plan documents are digital, but paper copies are available on request by calling 407-481-5672, ext. 305.

*The following pages include a closer look at each plan, along with checklists for involving the public. This process usually results in a review period of 15-30 days.*



## Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

This plan, previously known as the Long Range Transportation Plan, identifies future transportation improvements needed to maintain adequate mobility and accommodate growth. The plan is developed through a comprehensive analysis of community needs and is guided by public input. The plan also includes the required Congestion Management Process (CMP), which provides for the effective management and operation of the transportation system.

### Metropolitan Transportation Plan Outreach Checklist

- Official 45-day public comment period for Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Public Participation draft plan on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.
- Board approves Public Participation Plan after review by advisory committees and summary of public comment; staff executes the outreach plan to support the development of the MTP.
- Draft MTP reviewed by MetroPlan Orlando advisory committees.
- Public notice is distributed electronically.
- Ample opportunities for public comment throughout, including a process for submitting written public comments.
- Provide summary of public comments to the board before it takes action, and respond to comments in writing, when applicable.
- Board vote on MTP adoption with public comment period at the meeting.
- Publication of adopted plan on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.

## Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendments & Modifications

Changes to the MTP are occasionally needed. These may be deemed either “amendments,” or “administrative modifications,” according to the Florida Department of Transportation MPO Handbook. An amendment is a revision to the plan that involves a major change, such as a change in project cost, project/project schedule, or a major change in design concept or design scope. An administrative modification is a smaller revision that includes minor changes to the plan. An administrative modification does not require public review and comment.

### Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment Outreach Checklist

- Proposed amendment published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.
- Review by the MPO advisory committees.
- Ample opportunities provided for public input throughout, including a process for submitting written comments.
- Amendment revised, as needed, based on public input, which is shared with the board.
- Board votes on amendment.
- Approved amendment published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov



## Prioritized Project List

Once projects are included in the 20-year plan, they need to be prioritized as they await funding. MetroPlan Orlando's formal process for prioritizing projects results in a Prioritized Project List (PPL), which is reviewed annually by the board. This list uses a series of performance-based federal, state, and local criteria to prioritize the projects, including such evaluation measures as safety, air quality, environmental justice, and accessibility.

### *Prioritized Project List Outreach Checklist*

- Draft list published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.
- Review by the MPO advisory committees.
- Draft list presented at MPO advisory committee meetings.
- Board vote on approval.
- Approved Prioritized Project List published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.

## Transportation Improvement Program

This five-year plan assigns available funding to specific projects. MetroPlan Orlando develops a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) each year, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation. The local priorities then are reflected in the MPO's portion of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

### *Transportation Improvement Program Outreach Checklist*

- Draft project information published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov in advance of committee review.
- Draft plan presented at MPO advisory committee meetings.
- Ample opportunities provided for public input throughout, including a process for submitting written comments.
- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input by providing summary of public comments to the board before it takes action, and respond to the comments in writing, when applicable.
- Board vote after public comment period.
- Approved Transportation Improvement Program published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.

## Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program

Most amendments to the TIP receive a review (as outlined in the checklist that follows) before becoming part of the plan and being published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.



Exceptions are made when an emergency amendment must be approved prior to the next board meeting for the amended project to receive funding. Then, the MetroPlan Orlando Board chair is authorized to approve the amendment and sign the corresponding resolution on behalf of the board without calling an emergency meeting. The chair's approval of the amendment then must be provided to advisory committees as an information item and ratified at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

#### **Transportation Improvement Program Non-Emergency Amendment Outreach Checklist**

- Proposed amendment published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov in advance of committee review.
- Amendment reviewed by MPO advisory committees.
- Comment opportunities at advisory and board meetings.
- Board vote, following public comment period.
- Approved Transportation Improvement Program amendment becomes part of Transportation Improvement Program published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.

### **Unified Planning Work Program**

This plan provides a work program for MetroPlan Orlando, including the transportation planning budget and related activities for the metropolitan area. It is also the organization's official budget document.

Though the document covers a two-year period, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is reviewed annually to refine previously identified tasks and better reflect changes in the economic climate.

#### **UPWP Outreach Checklist**

- Draft UPWP published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov in advance of committee review.
- Draft UPWP presented at MPO advisory committee meetings.
- Board vote on approval.
- Approved UPWP published on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.



## HOW WILL WE MEET OUR GOALS?

*We have a system for evaluating progress in key areas.*

All our public participation activities at MetroPlan Orlando are focused on establishing a comprehensive and inclusive process through various methods and creating continuous opportunities to engage the public in transportation planning. Public outreach occurs in person and online in activities organized by MetroPlan Orlando, as well as in response to public requests.

Following are two broad goals that will guide our public participation performance. Each one is realized through objectives, strategies, and tools that can be measured to evaluate performance.

### Goal 1

Encourage two-way communication with the community by informing members of the public about relevant transportation issues and ensuring they have a voice in the transportation planning process.

#### Objectives that support Goal 1:

- A.** Plan or take part in at least two outreach events per month.

#### SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS:

- Use targeted meetings, partnerships and other methods to foster meaningful participation by a broad range of participants.
- Leverage partnerships with transportation agencies, local governments, and interested parties to broaden outreach across the region and reach transit riders, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Maintain an active speaker's bureau to inform community groups about transportation planning and provide easily accessible information on how to request speakers via telephone, email or website signup ([MetroPlanOrlando.gov/community-outreach/request-a-speaker](https://MetroPlanOrlando.gov/community-outreach/request-a-speaker)).
- Enhance in-person engagement tactics by deploying new techniques and strategies tailored specifically to the target audience.
- Provide periodic presentations to board and committee members, working groups, and partners on outreach activities and feedback received from the public.
- Expand traditional in-person engagement methods by doing things such as hosting educational and STEM-based activities and partnering with community-based organizations.

- B.** Publish and distribute easy-to-read and visually appealing materials that use plain language to inform the public about significant accomplishments, key issues, upcoming events, and participation opportunities relating to the work of MetroPlan Orlando and transportation planning.

#### SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS:

- Distribute printed products, such as annual reports, brochures, and project-specific reports that provide accessible information, summarize accomplishments, and outline key issues.



- b) Use and expand on digital outreach materials, such as the organization website, electronic newsletters, surveys and videos that maximize visualization and interaction to make outreach more effective.
  - c) Develop targeted media materials for print, broadcast and online outlets to help in reporting stories related to transportation planning by providing facts and context.
  - d) Provide information (text, photos, video) about outreach activities such as fact sheets, reports, website posts, electronic newsletter articles, and social media posts.
  - e) Use social media and digital platforms to educate the public and bring awareness to initiatives, feature programs and partnerships, highlight key project updates and achievements, promote public meetings and facilitate public input and testimonials.
  - f) Develop physical, project-specific advertisements and promotions to inform the public of engagement opportunities and issues.
- C. Meet federal and state requirements for public involvement by having successful certifications annually from the Florida Department of Transportation and every four years from the U.S Department of Transportation.

#### SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS:

- a) Review information from the FDOT Handbook for MPOs, Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine guidelines, U.S. Dept. of Transportation, and other sources.

#### *Measurement of Results for Goal 1:*

The measurement of success for this goal will be to increase average outreach output annually over the 2024 base year, with documented engagement, as outlined below:

- Outreach events/ speaker's bureau presentations
- Promotional and informative materials content review
- Streamline digital engagement by ensuring consistent placement of materials on all online platforms.
- Use Google Analytics and statistics from eblast software to track effectiveness of digital engagement efforts to website visitors and recipients of email updates.
- Social Media postings (maintain average 4% engagement, via social media monitor)
- Certification by the Florida Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration.

#### Goal 2

Increase engagement of underserved groups based on age, ability, language, financial resources, access to technology. Engaging underserved groups can improve transportation for the entire community, as well as minimize or avoid potential harm from a project. Target audiences include traditionally underserved populations in the region – senior citizens, economically disadvantaged, physically disabled, young people, and people with limited proficiency in English.



### Objectives that support Goal 2:

- A. Develop ways to provide outreach for traditionally underserved populations in the region, using components of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making guide (2022, Updated November 2023). The focus areas, included in our Nondiscrimination and Language Plan, were established by layering regional maps of disadvantaged populations and identifying the areas with the highest concentrations of people who meet those criteria.

#### SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS:

- Convey issues in ways that are meaningful to various cultural groups.
  - Bridge racial, cultural, and economic barriers that affect participation.
  - Use communication techniques that enable people to interact with other participants
  - Ensure meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).
  - Provide reasonable modifications and accommodations needed for participation of persons with disabilities.
  - Develop partnerships on a one-on-one or small group basis to build deeper trust and relationships.
  - Increase participation by underserved groups by using community representatives.
  - Gain an understanding of the experiences and results of transportation decision-making processes that were not equitable.
- B. Develop and use an outreach program appropriate for Central Florida students, with an emphasis on planning a future transportation system.

#### SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS:

- Use programs that promote transportation planning in schools or for school-aged groups.
- Distribute age-appropriate materials that explain fundamentals of the transportation system at school and community events.
- Incorporate innovative ideas such as time-capsule events, trivia nights, project walking tours, bicycling, and bus tours and STEM-based classroom activities for students of all ages and grade-levels.

#### *Measurement of Results for Goal 2:*

The measurement of success for this goal will be to provide documentation of the following:

- Dedicate 25% of MetroPlan Orlando's outreach events to occur in communities that are currently underserved or affected by future transportation plans.
- Explore new and innovative outreach tools for getting participation from hard-to-reach or underserved groups.
- Engage community/neighborhood ambassadors and advocate organizations to assist with cross-promoting campaigns and initiatives.



## WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

*MetroPlan Orlando complies with state and federal regulations.*

The procedures for community engagement are determined by the rules and regulations set forth in federal legislation and policy. Particulars of the federal guidance are cited in this section and are included in the Appendix. However, community engagement is more than just a requirement. It is a critical element of our planning process.

MetroPlan Orlando welcomes advice, suggestions and ideas about regional issues from interested persons and groups. There are many opportunities and levels of involvement related to public policy development. We encourage the public to be involved throughout the decision-making process, including at local government levels where early stages of policy formation often occur.

The MetroPlan Orlando Public Participation Plan is developed in consultation with all interested parties, identifying procedures, strategies, desired outcomes, and evaluation tools related to:

- Providing adequate notice of public participation activities;
- Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
- Using visualization techniques;
- Making public information available on MetroPlanOrlando.gov;
- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received;
- Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by the existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households;
- Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final plan differs significantly from the version made available for public comment;
- Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes;
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

The MetroPlan Orlando public participation process is continuing, cooperative and comprehensive.

### Laws Governing Public Participation

As part of the planning process, federal law (§450.316, Code of Federal Regulation), and state law (Section 286, Florida statutes) both require public involvement to ensure that various parties are given reasonable opportunities to participate. These parties may include, but are not limited to: individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, and representatives of users of public transit.



## HOW DO WE WELCOME ALL PARTICIPATION?

*A Nondiscrimination & Language plan lays out a process.*



MetroPlan Orlando is committed to equity in transportation planning and welcomes participation from everyone. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is designed to work in concert with the organization's Transportation for All: Overcoming Barriers Equity Plan, which includes the Title VI Nondiscrimination & Language Plan. This plan is posted under Transportation for All: Overcoming Barriers Equity Plan on MetroPlanOrlando.gov.

For questions or concerns about civil rights, nondiscrimination, please contact our Public Information Manager / Title VI Coordinator at (407) 481-5672, ext. 320 or [Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov](mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov).

### Our Public Participation Policy

Meetings and events at MetroPlan Orlando are open to the public and are posted in the online calendar at MetroPlanOrlando.gov. The following information about how to request reasonable accommodations is included on electronic and printed events listings:

Public participation is conducted without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, or family status. Persons wishing to express concerns, who require special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or who require language services (free of charge) should contact MetroPlan Orlando by phone or email at least three days prior to the event: (407) 481-5672 or [Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov](mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov).

La participación pública se lleva a cabo sin distinción de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad, discapacidad, religión o estado familiar. Las personas que deseen expresar inquietudes, que requieran asistencia especial bajo la Ley de Americanos con Discapacidad (ADA) o que requieran servicios de traducción (sin cargo) deben ponerse en contacto con MetroPlan Orlando por teléfono o por correo electrónico por lo menos tres días antes del evento: (407) 481-5672 o [Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov](mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov).



## HOW DO WE MAKE SURE INFORMATION GETS OUT TO THE PUBLIC?

*MetroPlan Orlando provides notices in various formats.*

MetroPlan Orlando takes steps to ensure residents are aware of important information about the planning process and about opportunities for involvement that are available to them.

### Meeting Announcements & Notification

According to the state's Sunshine Law (Section 286 of the Florida Statutes), the public must have "reasonable notice" of the meetings of public boards and commissions. MetroPlan Orlando provides notice of the dates and times of all meetings in several ways:

- All meeting information is posted at the MPO office.
- All meetings are posted on the MetroPlanOrlando.gov electronic calendar, along with contact information and agendas when available.
- For some special meetings, or meetings that occur at different times or locations than normal, the organization uses additional tools for advance notification to support the regular methods. These may include emails to database subscribers, social media, or notifications via partners or media.
- MetroPlan Orlando makes all materials available in print, upon request, and regularly publicizes the opportunity to ask for print materials.
- MetroPlan Orlando provides an online, virtual option for the public to participate in meetings remotely. Information on accessing the virtual meeting is published in the website calendar. Virtual participants will have opportunities to comment.

### Public Record of Meetings

Sunshine Law stipulates that minutes must be taken of all public meetings. MetroPlan Orlando takes minutes of meetings, distributes them to involved board and committee members, posts them promptly on MetroPlanOrlando.gov after approval, and provides written copies on request.



## HOW DOES SOCIAL MEDIA SUPPORT OUR OUTREACH?

*We use it in many areas of public participation, and a policy guides its use.*

MetroPlan Orlando is committed to engaging the public in different ways and remaining flexible as methods change. Social media use has now become a must for public participation toolboxes. It brings a special set of needs and considerations.

MetroPlan Orlando's use of social media is guided by the organizational policy below.

### MetroPlan Orlando Social Media Policy

UPDATED 2024

This chapter defines the social networking and social media policy for MetroPlan Orlando. To address the changing ways Central Floridians, communicate and obtain information online, we aim to use social media in conjunction with traditional outreach methods to reach a broader audience.

Social media is a common way for people to get information and share comments, so it is a natural place to engage them on transportation planning. MetroPlan Orlando recognizes that public record and public access laws require a thoughtful approach. The organization uses a digital archiving system for social media to help comply with public record requests. As additional guidance is provided at the state level, the organization will modify the application of social media tools, when necessary.

Should you have any questions about the terms of use of MetroPlan Orlando's social media channels or the Social Media Policy, please contact the public involvement team at 407-481-5672 or [Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov](mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.gov). MetroPlan Orlando adheres to the following social media guidelines to ensure compliance with Florida's open government and public record laws:



#### Access

The public will be able to view all social media content posted by MetroPlan Orlando and to comment on posts within the channels. However, content generated by members of the public may not automatically appear.

At all times, MetroPlan Orlando will use social media to encourage substantive and courteous conversation online.



The organization will regularly monitor user comments and take appropriate action to delete inappropriate comments that violate the rules of engagement, as outlined below. MetroPlan Orlando will keep a record of any deleted comments.

User comments containing these types of content will not be allowed:

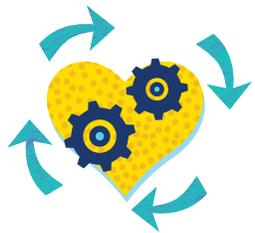
- Unrelated to the particular post being commented upon
- Supporting or opposing political campaigns or ballot measures
- Profanity
- Promoting, fostering or perpetuating discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation
- Sexual content or links to sexual content
- Solicitations of commerce
- Conducting or encouraging illegal activity
- Possibly compromising safety or security of public or private entities
- Violating a legal ownership interest of any other party



### Content

MetroPlan Orlando's social media channels contain a mix of our own original content – highlighting the organization's activities and those of partners – and information purposed from outside sources and linking to external sites. Appearance of external links does not constitute an official endorsement on behalf of MetroPlan Orlando.

Use of social media will primarily focus on information about transportation or related to the transportation planning process.



### Posting & Administration

As is the case with the MetroPlan Orlando website, the public outreach staff will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media channels created to promote the mission of the organization. Content on the website and social media channels should be authorized by the Public Information Manager.

All MPO-related communication through the organization's official social media is expected to be conducted in a professional manner. Neither MPO staff nor the public should use the social media channels for personal purposes. MetroPlan Orlando will track social media activity regularly.





## Public Record

Social media records will conform to applicable public record retention schedules, as outlined in Florida Statutes.

MetroPlan Orlando board and committee members are prohibited from engaging in an exchange or discussion of matters via social media that will foreseeably come before the board or committee for official action. Such an exchange could violate Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine law.



## Disclaimer

MetroPlan Orlando's social media channels will contain this disclaimer, referring users to the Social Media Policy:

*Comments expressed on MetroPlan Orlando social media channels do not necessarily reflect the opinions and position of individual board members, administrators, or employees. In addition to information provided by MetroPlan Orlando, social media channels may contain comments and opinions from unrelated third parties, which are provided as a convenience to the public or for informational purposes. These comments or opinions do not constitute endorsement or approval by MetroPlan Orlando.*

*MetroPlan Orlando encourages courteous, civil discourse. Comments on MetroPlan Orlando social media channels are moderated according to the guidelines found in the organization's Social Media Policy, which prohibit certain types of material. These guidelines can be found in our Public Participation Plan. MetroPlan Orlando reserves the right to remove or hide a comment that is in violation of the policy, without notification.*



## HOW DO WE EVALUATE OUR SUCCESS?

*Periodic review is necessary to make sure the plan is effective.*

To ensure that this plan is effective in meeting its performance measures and that it satisfies federal and state requirements related to public involvement, MetroPlan Orlando will complete an update of the Public Participation Plan every five years to reflect the latest outreach approaches.

MetroPlan Orlando staff will review the goals, strategies, and tools included in the Public Participation Plan annually to ensure activities are meaningful and effective.

Outreach activities for MetroPlan Orlando will be posted regularly on a Public Participation “dashboard” on [MetroPlanOrlando.gov](http://MetroPlanOrlando.gov).

Public Participation includes, but is not limited to, digital outreach (social media, website updates, email blasts), events, community meetings and various stakeholder engagements.

The dashboard will outline how community outreach efforts are measuring up to the goals and objectives listed in this plan.



## WHAT DO THESE TERMS MEAN?

*If you're not familiar with our terminology, these definitions and abbreviations can help.*



Sometimes it seems like transportation planning has its own language. Here are some terms that you may encounter:

### **ADA**

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** A federal law that requires public facilities (including transportation services) to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

### **FDOT**

**Florida Department of Transportation:** This state agency oversees transportation for the state and is divided into districts. MetroPlan Orlando's region is contained in FDOT's 9-county District 5.

### **LEP**

**Limited English Proficiency:** Refers to a person who is not fluent in the English language. MetroPlan Orlando ensures individuals with limited English skills can participate in the transportation planning process through our Title VI Program: Nondiscrimination & Language Plan.

### **TITLE VI**

The portion of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that says no person in the U.S. can be excluded from programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

### **MTP**

**Metropolitan Transportation Plan:** 20-year forecast plan required of metropolitan planning organizations to determine regional goals and how transportation can best meet these goals.

### **TIP**

**Transportation Improvement Program:** Sets the schedule for improvements to the region's transportation system over the next five years.





# **APPENDIX**

## **2024 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

APPLICABLE STATE & FEDERAL LAWS

# MPO Program Management Handbook

Florida Department of Transportation

Office of Policy Planning

Revised: August 2023

*The following is excerpted from the MPO Management Handbook's Chapter 6: Public Involvement. You can access [the entire handbook here](#).*

## **6.3 Federal Requirements for Public Involvement**

Federal transportation planning regulations describe the requirements for MPOs in conducting public involvement activities during the transportation planning process. In addition, other Federal regulations and executive orders affect how an MPO's public involvement activities are planned and conducted. These requirements are described in this section.

### **6.3.1 Development of a Public Participation Plan**

MPOs are required to develop a Public Participation Plan (PPP). The requirements for this plan are contained in [23 C.F.R. 450.316](#), and are described below. More information on these requirements is contained in the "PY19 Program Accountability Results (PAR) Public Participation Plans," conducted in August 2019. While this assessment was conducted for non-TMA MPOs, the requirements cited in the assessment apply to all MPO PPPs.

The MPO must develop and use a documented PPP that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

[\[23 C.F.R. 450.316\(a\)\]](#)

The MPO is required to develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and must, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for: [\[23 C.F.R. 450.316\(a\)\(1\)\]](#)

- Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed LRTP and the TIP;
- Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

- Employing visualization techniques to describe LRTPs and TIPs;
- Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the Internet;
- Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the LRTP and the TIP;
- Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
- Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final LRTP or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
- Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes; and
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the public involvement procedures and strategies contained in the PPP to ensure a full and open participation process.

When developing the PPP, it is important to allow enough time to receive and respond to public input in order to find a balance between addressing appropriate public comments and adopting the LRTP within the required timeframe; this would include any meetings or hearings that take place during that time.

When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft LRTP and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required for air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) transportation conformity regulations (40 C.F.R. Part 93, Subpart A), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments are required to be included in the final LRTP and TIP. [\[23 C.F.R. 450.316\(a\)\(2\)\]](#)

A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days must be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved PPP must be provided to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for informational purposes. These copies must be posted on the Internet to the maximum extent practicable. [\[23 C.F.R. 450.316\(a\)\(3\)\]](#)

In developing LRTPs and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPO area. This consultation should include entities that are affected by transportation, including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements. In addition, the MPO must develop the LRTPs and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area; the process must provide for the design and delivery of transportation

services within the area that are provided by: [\[23 C.F.R. 450.316\(b\)\]](#)

- Recipients of FTA assistance under [\[49 U.S.C. Chapter 53\]](#);
- Governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. DOT to provide nonemergency transportation services; and
- Recipients of assistance under [23 U.S.C. 201-204](#) (Federal lands and Tribal transportation programs).

When the MPO area includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO must appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the PPP, LRTP, and TIP. [\[23 C.F.R. 450.316\(c\)\]](#)

When the MPO area includes Federal public lands, the MPO must appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the PPP, LRTP, and TIP. [\[23 C.F.R. 450.316\(d\)\]](#)

MPOs also must develop a documented process that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs in this section, which may be included in the MPO's Metropolitan Planning Agreement. [\[23 C.F.R. 450.316\(e\)\]](#)

Note that MPOs are required to conduct the activities listed in their plans. If the PPP calls for a public hearing for LRTPs, for instance, that hearing becomes a requirement; this is even if it is not required by law or regulation. Likewise, if the PPP calls for newspaper advertisements, the MPO must publish those advertisements. MPOs should clearly identify the minimum public involvement activities they will undertake for LRTPs, as well as any additional activities they may undertake. MPOs should anticipate the potential for additional meetings beyond the minimum and clearly identify in the PPP how the public will be informed of additional meetings. Please note MPOs are exempt from the state law that requires publishing meeting notices in the Florida Administrative Register (see [Section 120.52, FS](#)), but the MPO must follow the meeting noticing requirements in their PPP and should provide adequate notice to the public of their meetings.

PPPs are living documents that must be revisited periodically to reflect changing communities and their needs. As such, the MPO should update its PPP at a minimum of once every five years (preferably prior to the initiation of the development of a new LRTP) to ensure that it remains accurate and effective.

The FHWA PPP checklist is available on the [MPO Partner Site](#) to aid in the development and review on MPO PPPs.

### **6.3.2 Federal Public Involvement Requirements Specific to the LRTP**

When developing the LRTP, the MPO must provide interested parties with a reasonable

opportunity to comment on it using the strategies identified in the MPO's adopted PPP. In some cases, the MPO may develop a PPP specific to the LRTP as part of the scope of that project. If this is done, the PPP for the LRTP must be consistent with the overall PPP of the MPO. The PPP for the LRTP may provide additional detail about engagement strategies being used or individuals, groups, or agencies being engaged. The PPP for the LRTP may also include outreach opportunities beyond those identified in the MPO's adopted PPP. Parties that should be included in the development of LRTPs include:

- Public agencies,
- Indian Tribal governments,
- Representatives of public transportation employees,
- Public ports and airports,
- Freight shippers,
- Providers of freight transportation services,
- Private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employerbased commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program),
- Representatives of users of public transportation,
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities,
- Representatives of the disabled, and
- Other interested parties using the participation plan developed consistent with 23 C.F.R. 450.316(a). [\[23 C.F.R. 450.324\(k\)\]](#)

The MPO must publish or otherwise make readily available the LRTP for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means (e.g., the Internet). [\[23 C.F.R. 450.324\(l\)\]](#)

### **6.3.3 Federal LRTP Requirements Specific to Florida**

The MPO must be aware of additional requirements or guidance provided by FHWA and FTA when developing the LRTP. For example, in November 2012 and January 2018, the FHWA and FTA developed a summary of "expectations" for the subsequent update of LRTPs, Federal Strategies for Implementing Requirements for LRTP Update for the Florida MPOs, which are available in the Partner Library on the [MPO Partner Site](#). This additional guidance states that for LRTPs, MPO Boards, their advisory committees, and the public, should have the opportunity to periodically review the LRTP products, interim tasks, and reports that result in the final LRTP documentation. Furthermore, this guidance also states that final adopted LRTP documentation should be posted to the Internet; it should be available at the MPO offices, no later than 90 days after adoption.

### **6.3.4 Federal Public Involvement Requirements Specific to the TIP**

The MPO must provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP, as required by the PPP. In addition, the MPO must publish or otherwise make readily available the TIP for public review, including (to the maximum

extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means (e.g., the Internet), as described in the PPP. [\[23 C.F.R. 450.326\(b\)\]](#), [\[23 U.S.C. 134 \(i\)\(6\) and \(7\)\]](#)

In the event an MPO revises its TIP, the MPO must always use public participation procedures consistent with the MPO's PPP. However, public participation is not required for administrative modifications unless specifically addressed in the PPP. [\[23 C.F.R. 450.328\(a\)\]](#)

### **6.3.5 Public Involvement for the Federal Certification Review**

In conducting a certification review for a Transportation Management Area (TMA)/MPO, the FHWA and the FTA provide opportunities for public involvement within the metropolitan planning area under review. The FHWA and the FTA are required to consider the public input received in arriving at a decision on a certification action. This process can be used by the MPOs to improve the overall delivery of future public outreach based on the input received during the certification review process. [\[23 C.F.R. 450.336\(b\)\(4\)\]](#)

### **6.3.6 Americans with Disabilities Act**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits the exclusion of persons with disabilities from participation in services, programs, or activities of a public entity, including MPOs. In addition, the MPO has the responsibility of providing reasonable accommodation to those with disabilities who require special services to access information or participate in MPO activities. [\[42 U.S.C. 12131-12134\]](#)

See Chapter 10: Title VI and Nondiscrimination Program Guidance for Metropolitan Planning Organizations for a discussion of ADA requirements as they pertain to MPOs.

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

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. [\[42 U.S.C. 2000d-1\]](#) Title VI provides the following protection and activities relative to public involvement:

- Encourages the participation of minorities as members of planning or advisory bodies for programs receiving Federal funds;
- Requires information and services to be provided in languages other than English when significant numbers of potential beneficiaries have limited English-speaking ability; and
- Requires entities to notify the entire eligible population about programs.

See Chapter 10: Title VI and Nondiscrimination Program Guidance for Metropolitan Planning Organizations for a discussion of other Title VI requirements as they pertain to MPOs.

### **6.3.8 Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice**

[Executive Order \(EO\) 12898](#), Environmental Justice (EJ), requires all Federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects of its activities on minority and low-income populations. EO 12898 also promotes access to public information and public participation for minority and low-income communities.

MPOs must ensure and document early, continuous, and meaningful opportunities for involvement for these communities.

See Chapter 10: Title VI and Nondiscrimination Program Guidance for Metropolitan Planning Organizations for a discussion of EJ requirements as they pertain to MPOs.

### **6.3.9 Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency**

[Executive Order 13166](#), Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), requires agencies to develop plans so that people for whom English is not their native language or who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can have meaningful access to services provided. Factors for determining when meaningful access is necessary include:

- Number or proportion of LEP persons in the affected area;
- Frequency of contact with LEP persons;
- Importance of the service provided to LEP persons; and
- Resources available.

MPOs must use these four factors to determine when, and to what extent, LEP services are required. Translation of vital documents into languages other than English and oral interpretation through translators or other interpretive services are methods of communication that may constitute meaningful access.

See Chapter 10: Title VI and Nondiscrimination Program Guidance for Metropolitan Planning Organizations for a discussion of LEP requirements as they pertain to MPOs.

## **6.4 State Requirements for Public Involvement**

State public involvement requirements related to MPOs are described in this section.

### **6.4.1 State Public Involvement Requirements Specific to the LRTP**

In the development of its LRTP, each MPO must provide the public, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the LRTP. [\[s.339.175\(7\), F.S.\]](#)

#### **6.4.2 State Public Involvement Requirements Specific to the TIP**

During the development of the TIP, the MPO must, in cooperation with FDOT and any affected public transit operation, provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with reasonable notice of and an opportunity to comment on the proposed program. [\[s.339.175\(8\)\(e\), F.S.\]](#)

#### **6.4.3 Public Involvement for the Annual List of Prioritized Projects**

Each MPO annually must prepare a list of project priorities and submit the list to the appropriate FDOT District by August 1 of each year. The list must have been reviewed by the technical and citizens' advisory committees and approved by the MPO Board/Commission before submission to the District. The annual list of project priorities must be based upon project selection criteria that consider, among other items, the MPO's public involvement procedures. [\[s.339.175\(8\)\(b\)\(5\), F.S.\]](#)

#### **6.4.4 Public Involvement for the Annual List of Federally Obligated Projects**

The MPO is required annually to publish or otherwise make available for public review the annual listing of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. [\[s.339.175\(8\)\(h\), F.S.\]](#)

#### **6.4.5 Public Involvement and MPO Committees**

Most MPOs consider their standing committees to be a fundamental part of their public involvement activities. The formation of a technical advisory committee (TAC) and citizens' advisory committee (CAC) are required pursuant to [s.339.175\(6\)\(d\), F.S.](#) and [s.339.175\(6\)\(e\), F.S.](#); and formation guidance is provided in Chapter 2: Metropolitan Planning Organization Formation and Modification. As an alternative to the use of a CAC, Florida Statute provides provisions for MPOs to adopt an alternate program or mechanism that ensures adequate citizen involvement in the transportation planning process following approval by FHWA, FTA, and FDOT. MPOs may also consider additional standing committees as a public involvement activity to address specific needs, such as bicyclists, pedestrians, and multiuse trails, safety, goods/freight movement, etc. MPOs must address and include their committee activities in the PPP; they are encouraged to detail how the schedule for meetings, agenda packages, and actions of the committees will be communicated with the public and how the public can participate in those meetings.

#### **6.4.6 Government-in-the-Sunshine Law**

Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine Law [\[s.286.011, F.S.\]](#), mandates that all meetings of any board or commission of any state, county, municipal, or political subdivision, agency, or authority conduct business in a transparent manner to provide the public a right of access to proceedings. This includes an MPO's Governing Board, general members (voting and nonvoting members), and any active committees designed to advise the MPO Board such as TACs and CACs. The Sunshine Law provides guidance

on how to conduct MPO and the MPO advisory committee meetings and workshops; it also shows how to process public records, communications, notices, minutes, in addition to general ethics issues.

The Sunshine Law secures the public's right to attend or record meetings, for the public to have reasonable opportunity to be heard, and for all meetings to be open to the public. Therefore, MPOs must provide reasonable notice of meetings and make adequate accommodations to hold open meetings and provide an opportunity for public input.

Minutes of meetings must be available for public inspections. MPOs are prohibited from holding public meetings at a facility or location that discriminates on the basis of sex, age, race, creed, color, origin, or economic status; they are also forbidden to hold meetings at places that otherwise restrict public access. The statute establishes penalties for violations of these provisions and exceptions for specific situations. MPOs should consult legal counsel for any questions regarding Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine Law.

#### **6.4.7 Jessica Lunsford Act**

The Jessica Lunsford Act [\[s.1012.465, F.S.\]](#) requires background checks of all persons entering school grounds when children are present. MPOs should consult legal counsel before planning to hold a meeting on school property.

#### **6.4.8 FDOT Resources**

For more information about public involvement, please consult [FDOT's Public Involvement Resource Guide](#), which includes the Public Engagement Resource Guide. This resource provides in-depth guidance for public involvement activities in general.

Other resources include policies, quick references, manuals, and websites covering a range of topics, from guidance on how to host virtual or hybrid (in-person and virtual) public meetings to resources on how to engage people with limited English proficiency