



Public Participation Plan

Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization

Adopted: TBD

Updated Draft for Review: April 24, 2024

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For more information about the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization or to learn about ways to get involved, please contact:



Lake~Sumter MPO Office
1300 Citizens Boulevard, Suite 175
Leesburg, FL 34748
Phone: (352) 315-0170
Fax: (352) 315-0993
Web: www.LakeSumterMPO.com

PLACEHOLDER FOR ADOPTING RESOLUTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (LSMPO) has created this Public Participation Plan (PPP) to outline the process and expectations for public engagement during the MPO's transportation planning and decision-making activities. Early and continuous involvement of the public audience is an essential part of the LSMPO's efforts to ensure that the outcome of its planning products meet the needs of local communities.

This PPP is compliant with federal and state legislative regulations that guide transportation planning and public involvement activities. It was developed through the MPO process, which includes advisory committee review, a public open house event, and a 45-day public comment period prior to being adopted by the MPO Policy Board. The LSMPO PPP will be reviewed regularly and amended as the need arises when procedures or best practices change.

The goal of this PPP is to establish an ongoing process through which public feedback is regularly identified and considered in the development of MPO plans and documents.

How to Get Involved in the Transportation Planning Process:



VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

www.LakeSumterMPO.com for documents, meeting calendars, announcements, and more.



SEND US AN EMAIL:

info@LakeSumterMPO.com to ask questions, provide comments, or join our mailing list.



WRITE TO US:

1300 Citizens Boulevard, Suite 175, Leesburg, FL 34748 to submit comments or questions.



CALL US:

(352) 315-0170 to ask questions, give us feedback, or talk about transportation.



PARTICIPATE IN PERSON:

By attending an MPO Policy Board meeting, a public outreach event, or serving on an advisory committee.

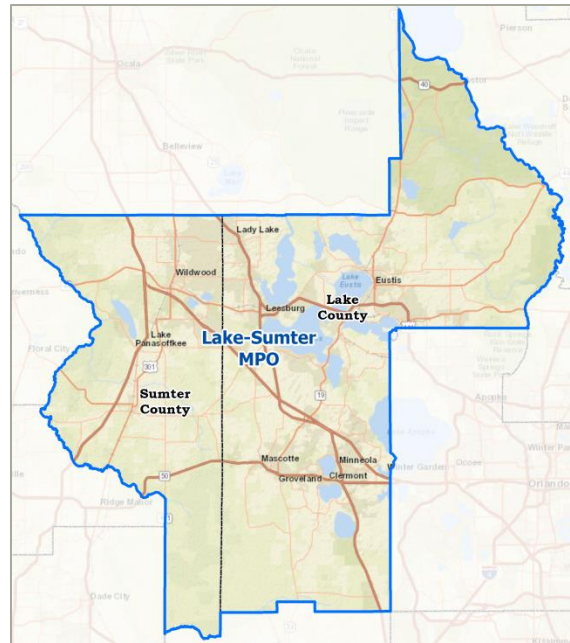
INTRODUCTION

About Us

The Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was established on February 25, 2004, after the 2000 U.S. Census determined the urbanized areas around Leesburg, Eustis and Lady Lake had exceeded a population of 50,000.

The Lake-Sumter MPO seeks to improve transportation in both counties for all modes of travel, including mass transit, walking, bicycling, rail, air, as well as the automobile. The MPO prioritizes capital improvements to address the counties' travel needs and allocates federal funding to implement the projects as identified in the LRTP and the TIP.

Transportation planning is at a critical time in the Lake and Sumter County region. Due to growth, it is predicted that vehicle miles traveled daily on the Lake-Sumter roadway network will almost double during the next 20 years.



LSMPO Planning Area Demographics

Based on data from the 2020 Decennial Census, the population of the LSMPO planning area is 513,708. One of the focus points of the MPO is to work with the public and its partner agencies to ensure that the area's transportation network can accommodate this growth while satisfying the needs and preferences of local communities. As such, data regarding demographic information is critical when making planning and public participation decisions.

More detailed demographic information for these geographies can be found in the MPO's Title VI and LEP plans which documents data for socioeconomic categories that are often examined when preparing for public engagement efforts to determine whether specialized outreach strategies may be beneficial in certain areas. These demographic indicators coincide with many of the historically underserved populations. As a result, the MPO regularly reviews current demographic data to help ensure that the public participation process remains inclusive of all populations.

Figure 1-1 Lake County Summary

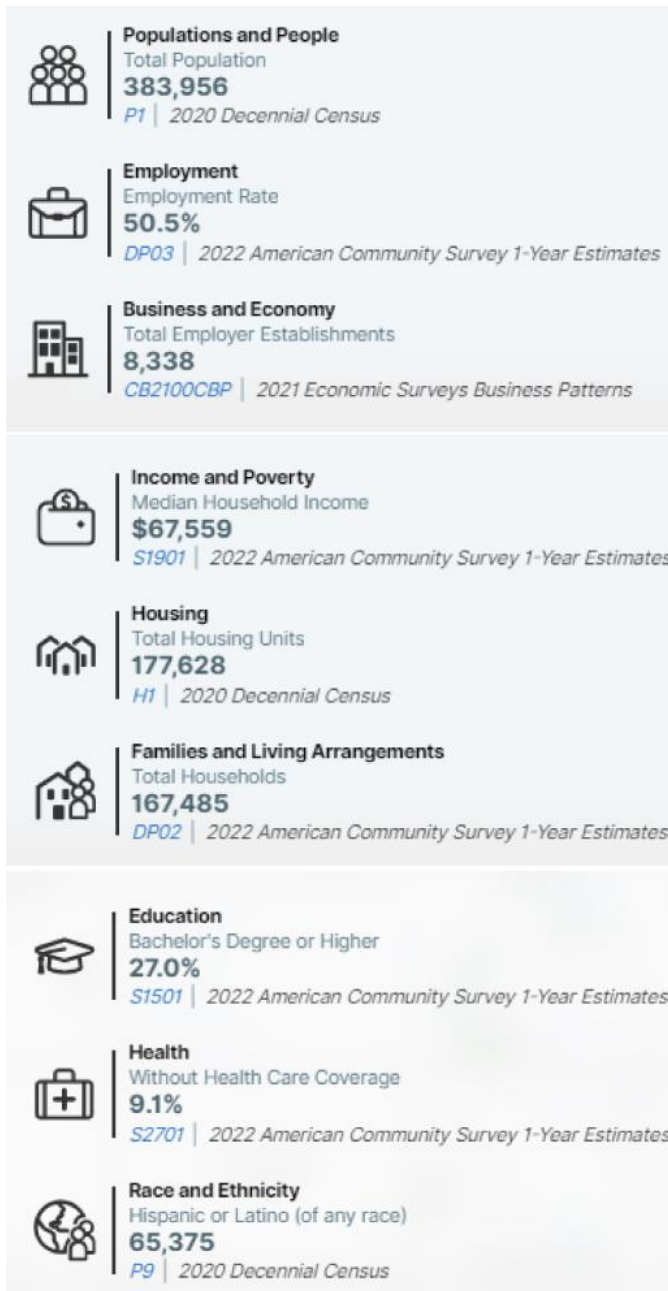
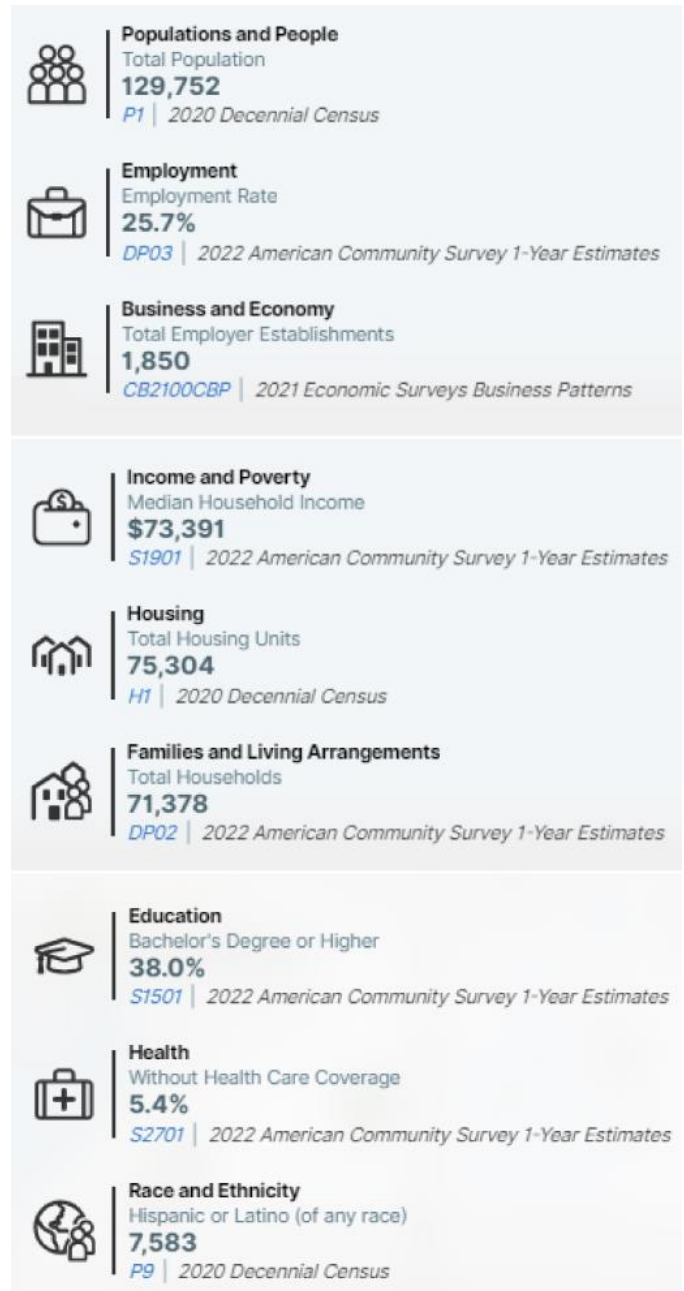


Figure 1-2 Sumter County Summary



Mission & Vision

The mission of the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization is to provide the local governments, agencies and residents of Lake and Sumter counties a forum for addressing growth and transportation issues, with an emphasis on: 1) planning a regional, multi-modal transportation network that balances accessibility and mobility; 2) incorporating the visions of the member governments into a cohesive regional approach; and 3) coordinating with regional partners and state and federal agencies to meet the needs of the public.

Key Responsibilities

LSMPO's major annual responsibilities are to perform the tasks of preparing the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Public Participation Plan (PPP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the annual List of Priority Projects (LOPP), and the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP).

As with all transportation planning legislated by federal and state laws, LSMPO 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, LSMPO incorporates into its planning efforts the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Federal and State MPO Requirements

This section provides a brief overview of legislative regulations at the federal and state levels that set the framework for guiding the transportation planning process and its public involvement activities. A more detailed description of these regulations can be found in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) MPO Program Management Handbook [Metropolitan Planning Support \(fdot.gov\)](https://www.fdot.gov/metroplanning/)

The checklist used to ensure the PPP's compliance with regulatory requirements can be found in **Appendix D**.

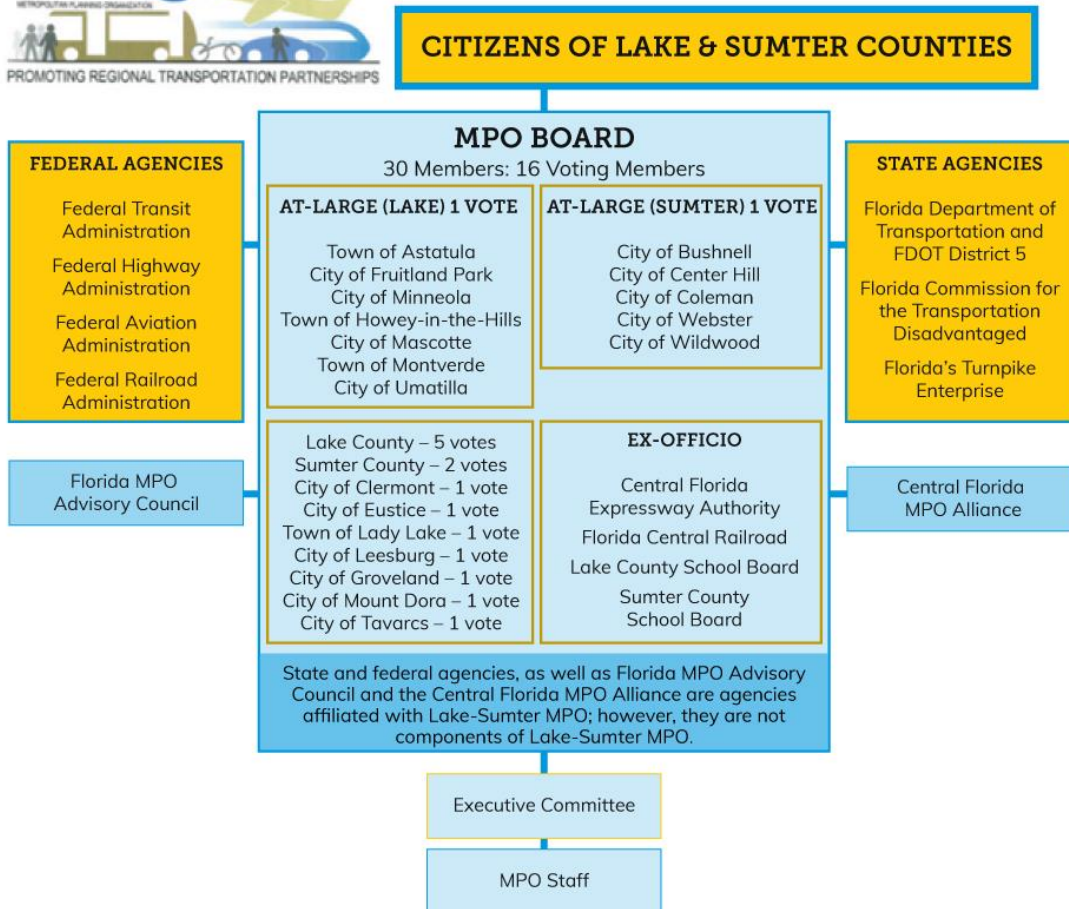
MPO Organization

Representatives of Lake County and Sumter County governments, the fourteen (14) municipalities of Lake County, the five (5) municipalities of Sumter County, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Florida Central Railroad, Lake County Schools, Sumter District Schools, and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) are involved in the transportation planning process facilitated by the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (LSMPO). LSMPO's purpose is to provide effective leadership in the initiation and development of transportation plans, programs, and strategies.

As the governmental body responsible for the guidance of the transportation planning process, LSMPO strives to ensure recommendations comply with the goals and standards of the Federal Government, the State, Lake County, Sumter County, and the nineteen (19) incorporated jurisdictions. LSMPO functions include, but not limited to, the preparation of the tasks required by state rule or by federal policy.



Organization Chart



Purpose of the Public Participation Plan (PPP)

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) is intended to outline the expectations for public engagement during the MPO's transportation planning and decision-making activities. It provides a framework for the MPO's goal of conducting an ongoing process through which public involvement is regularly identified and considered. In particular, the PPP outlines the audience, intent, tools, and expectations for proactive public outreach and engagement on transportation issues. It includes the objectives that will be used to guide the public involvement process and the measures that will be used to evaluate its performance. This PPP also includes multiple strategies that will consistently be used to engage the public in the transportation planning process and the variety of outreach techniques available to the MPO. Overall, this plan defines how the LSMPO will effectively engage the public and gather valuable feedback on transportation issues affecting them.

Public involvement is an essential part of the MPO's efforts to ensure that the outcome of its planning products meets the needs of local communities. Continuous engagement with the public early in the planning process allows the MPO to incorporate comments and preferences into the decision-making process, and ultimately, into the local transportation system.

The appropriate level of public involvement depends largely on the plan, program, or project being developed. Strategies may vary from simply providing public notices for awareness to conducting in-depth public workshops or other virtual events with local communities to find solutions to specific problems. The key to a successful planning effort is to find the best strategy for involving the public in a meaningful way to ensure that their voice is heard throughout the process.

This PPP is intended to help the MPO identify the most effective activities for communicating with all stakeholders involved, including individuals and organizations. This PPP was developed through the MPO process, which includes advisory committee review, and a 45-day public comment period prior to being adopted by the MPO Policy Board in June 2024. A list of feedback received during the PPP public review period can be found in

Appendix A. The LSMPO PPP will be reviewed regularly and amended as the need arises when procedures or best practices change.

As with all transportation planning legislated by federal and state laws, LSMPO is responsible for ensuring adequate representation of and compatibility among state, county, and municipal projects in the transportation planning process. Projects funded through public dollars are 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 participation is assured. As part of that plan, a required

Common Terms

To assist with understanding transportation planning terminology, here are some common terms found in this document:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – a federal law that requires public facilities (including transportation services) to be accessible to person with disabilities.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – refers to a person who is not fluent in the English language. The Lake~Sumter MPO has a LEP plan to ensure individuals with limited English skills can participate in the planning process.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – a 20-year forecast plan required of state planning agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations to consider a range of factors in determining regional goals and how transportation can best meet these goals.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

For more terms often used in the transportation planning process, see the Appendix C of this PPP.

element is the outlining of how 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.

This includes consideration of all modes of transportation with respect to various members of the public. For example, LSMPO incorporates into its planning efforts the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Anyone wishing to contact the LSMPO with comments, questions, or complaints regarding Title VI, please contact:



Michael Woods

Executive Director
& Title VI Specialist
(352) 315-0170

Michael.Woods@LakeSumterMPO.com

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Involving the appropriate agencies, public participants, and other stakeholders is key to a successful public outreach effort and, most important, for identifying transportation improvements that are supported by the communities being served. The public involvement process outlined in this PPP ensures maximum exposure, continuous feedback, and communitywide awareness of issues and concerns through a pro-active approach.

The public participation process outlined in this plan provides a wide variety of opportunities and strategies from which the LSMPO can choose when determining how to effectively engage those involved. Interested persons and groups can be targeted using various tools and techniques to distribute information concerning MPO plans and programs and provide opportunities for the public to ask questions and provide meaningful feedback prior to action by the Board. This PPP is intended to emphasize the appropriate public outreach tools and techniques to be used to tailor-fit a given effort's unique needs. Additionally, a variety of stakeholders may be involved in the public participation process depending on the specific project type and location. Coordination with these stakeholders leads to inclusive and collaborative relationships and partnerships that result in improvement projects that are cost-feasible and effective and meet the needs and demands of local communities.

Public Participation Stakeholders:

LSMPO Policy Board & Advisory Committees

Members of the Public

Media Outlets

Transit Providers

Adjacent Communities

Traditionally Underserved Populations

Permitting & Regulatory Agencies

Elected Officials

Stakeholder & Partner Agencies

Business Owners

Property Owners

Community Organizations

Tribal Groups

Public Participation Stakeholders

Public Land Managers

The Public Audience

This section of the PPP describes the overall MPO public audience and stakeholders, including the MPO Policy Board and advisory committees, partner agencies, and local community members. LSMPO takes a proactive approach to providing opportunities for the public to be involved early and with continuing involvement in all phases of the planning process. Public notice of public information meetings and hearings will be undertaken as listed in the **Outreach Approach** section and access to information as listed in the **Outreach Policies section**.

LSMPO developed a database of email addresses of citizens and organizations that is used to notify citizens of meetings and upcoming opportunities for input. This database is continually expanded as additional citizens ask to be added, attend the informational public meetings, and provide comments. Additionally, meeting agendas for all LSMPO Board and committee meetings include an opportunity for public comment. The agendas for these meetings, as well as an annual notification of meeting dates will be posted on the LSMPO website. Public meeting notices will be advertised in English and in Spanish as requested or identified, and to target areas of high limited English proficiency as identified in the Community Characteristics Inventory.

Advisory Committees

Advisory committees have been formed to advise the LSMPO Governing Board and staff in the preparation and review of public participation plans, transportation plans, programs, and other related matters. Each of the advisory committees provides unique contributions to the development of LSMPO's transportation plans, programs, and projects.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

TAC MEETING DETAILS

The TAC typically meets on the second Wednesday of the month (unless otherwise advertised). Meetings begin at 1:30pm and takes place at the location below:



Lake~Sumter MPO Board Room
1300 Citizens Boulevard, Suite 175
Leesburg, FL 34748

All meetings are open to the public and your participation is encouraged. Agendas are posted in advance of the meetings and are available online at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Note: The committee may not meet every month. Dates and times may change due to holidays or other conflicts. In the event of a statewide emergency, the TAC meeting may be held virtually, and specific meeting information will be posted at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is comprised of interested community members representing the various local governments, local civic and services organizations, advocacy groups, multimodal representatives and special interest representatives as required by federal and state guidelines. This committee has a special advisory role to the LSMPO because it provides a necessary communication link between the MPO and the community it serves. The committee also solicits input and recommendations from other citizen groups and interested stakeholders when reviewing transportation plans and programs.

CAC MEETING DETAILS

The Community Advisory Committee typically meets on the second Wednesday of the month (unless otherwise advertised). Meetings begin at 3:00pm and takes place at the location below:



Lake~Sumter MPO Board Room
1300 Citizens Boulevard, Suite 175
Leesburg, FL 34748

All meetings are open to the public and your participation is encouraged. Agendas are posted in advance of the meetings and are available online at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Note: The committee may not meet every month. Dates and times may change due to holidays or other conflicts. In the event of a statewide emergency, the CAC meeting may be held virtually, and specific meeting information will be posted at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Are you interested in
Serving on the CAC?

Contact the Lake~Sumter Executive Director at
Michael.Woods@lakesumtermpo.com

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED COORDINATING BOARD

The Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB) is an advisory group to an MPO on para-transit issues. LSMPO has two (2) 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 Governing Board. The purpose of the TDCB is to develop local service needs and to provide information, advice, and direction to the Governing 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.

SUMTER COUNTY

The Sumter County TDCB typically meets quarterly on Monday afternoons at 2pm and takes place at the location below.



Lake~Sumter MPO
1300 Citizens Blvd, Suite 175
Leesburg, FL 34748

LAKE COUNTY

The Lake County TDCB meets quarterly on Monday mornings at 10am and takes place at the location below:



Lake~Sumter MPO
1300 Citizens Boulevard, Suite 175
Leesburg, FL 34748

All meetings are open to the public and your participation is encouraged. Agendas are posted in advance of the meetings and are available online at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Note: The committee meets quarterly. Dates and times may change due to holidays or other conflicts. In the event of a statewide emergency, the TDCB meetings may be held virtually and specific meeting information will be posted at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Get the Most Current Information:

The most up-to-date information about our meetings is on the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization's website calendar. You can access it through the following link:
<http://www.lakesumtermpo.com/calendar/>

STATE COORDINATION

The LSMPO coordinates with other agencies and organizations at the state level to ensure consistency with statewide plans and programs and to identify funding opportunities for local planning efforts and projects. As a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC), a statewide transportation planning and policy organization, the LSMPO works with the other 26 MPOs throughout Florida to participate in collective policy and best-practice discussions related to the transportation planning, decision-making, and public participation processes.



Additionally, the LSMPO consistently works with FDOT Central Office and District 5 staff to determine and review project priorities. This partnership is critical in the execution of projects identified in the MPO's planning products and helps to construct FDOT's 5-year Work Program. As a major regulatory and funding agency supporting the MPO and the transportation facilities in the LSMPO planning area, FDOT District 5 is a regular member of the MPO TAC and a non-voting member advising the MPO Policy Board. FDOT staff play a key role in distributing federal and state guidelines, policies, and legislation to the MPO and assisting it in developing plans and carrying out studies. The results and recommendations of these plans and studies, in turn, assist FDOT in statewide and districtwide planning efforts.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The public audience includes more than just transportation agency Boards and committees; the best planning decisions and project recommendations result from a process that continually seeks citizen participation. Members of the public play a critical role by working with the MPO to help ensure that future transportation improvements meet their needs and preferences. As such, the MPO continuously seeks to maximize

opportunities for local communities to participate in planning efforts. This includes providing multiple ways for citizens to receive information, provide comments, and have an impact on the decision-making process. By ensuring that all interested persons have access and the ability to participate, the MPO staff, Policy Board, and advisory committees gain valuable information on the public perspective, which results in better transportation planning and funding decisions for the LSMPO planning area.

Members of the public can get involved in the transportation planning process in several different ways. Open houses and public workshops for specific projects are held in various locations throughout Lake and Sumter counties as well as virtually, allowing individuals to come for a few minutes or stay the entire duration. Public hearings for documents such as the TIP and LRTP allow for citizens to indicate projects they do or do not support. Information updates can be found by visiting the MPO's website or joining the MPO mailing list to receive email updates. Comments can be submitted via email or by dropping them off at outreach events or at the LSMPO offices located at 1300 Citizens Boulevard, Suite 175, Leesburg, FL 34748 on regular business days from 8:30 AM–4:30 PM. All MPO Board and advisory committee meetings are also open to the public for any citizen wishing to attend. A more comprehensive description of the tools and techniques the MPO uses for public participation efforts is provided in the next section of this PPP.

In addition to public outreach activities for individual plans and projects, community members can serve on one of the MPO advisory committees to review and provide feedback on agenda items. All interested applicants are asked to fill out an application available on the LSMPO website at lakesumtermpo.com/committees. The completed application can be emailed to info@LakeSumterMPO.com or dropped off at the LSMPO offices at the address listed above. MPO staff will review the application and determine if the applicant is eligible to serve on the committee for which they have applied. If selected, they will be notified and then receive an informational packet containing details of their responsibilities as a committee member, the bylaws of the committee, and any other information beneficial to the applicant.

HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

The historically or traditionally underserved communities in the LSMPO planning area are an important part of the overall public audience for MPO planning efforts. Executive Order 13985 defines underserved communities as “populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, which have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, or civil life.” These populations historically have been excluded from the transportation decision-making process and require special considerations to ensure that they have the same access to public participation opportunities as other members of the public. As a result, it is critical that the MPO continually considers the needs of these groups when planning and conducting public engagement activities so barriers to participation can be minimized or removed altogether.

The Justice40 initiative, led by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), aims to address disparities in transportation infrastructure and public services by ensuring that at least 40% of the benefits from various grants, programs, and initiatives are directed towards disadvantaged communities.

OUTREACH POLICIES

The outreach employed by LSMPO is guided by specific principles and standards. These components assist with providing a consistent experience for the public. The following section details the main policies guiding the LSMPO outreach process.

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 website www.LakeSumterMPO.com and at the LSMPO office located at 1300 Citizens Boulevard, Suite 175, Leesburg, FL 34748 during normal business hours.

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. Public meetings may be held using a digital platform for LSMPO to present information and request public feedback. The intent of holding public informational meetings at diverse locations is to solicit broad public comments. General meeting locations will be at the LSMPO office, Lake County Administration Building, the Lake-Sumter State College, the Sumter County Service Center, and other locations such as municipal city halls and/or offices, churches, community centers, etc.

Notice of public hearings and public informational meetings will be given in accordance with and listed in the **Outreach Approach** section. A reasonable attempt will be made to notify organizations representing minority and disabled communities. Public meetings will be held at locations accessible to and at times convenient to minority and disabled residents, including using a digital platform.

Special arrangements will be made to accommodate persons with disabilities, those with limited access to transportation, and people with limited English proficiency (LEP). 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. The LSMPO will ensure that all segments of the population including LEP persons have the opportunity to be involved in the transportation planning process. Interpreters will be provided when requested with advanced notice to accommodate non-English speaking individuals. The LSMPO LEP Plan may be reviewed at the following link: www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Public Record of Meetings

The Sunshine Law stipulates that minutes must be taken at all public meetings. LSMPO takes minutes of meetings, distributes them to Board and committee members, posts them promptly on www.LakeSumterMPO.com, after approval, and provides written copies upon request. If a public meeting is held using a digital platform, the entirety of the meeting will be virtually recorded, and digital copies will be provided upon request.

Public Hearings

Public hearings are a formal process to solicit public comment on specific plans being considered by LSMPO. Public hearings may be held using a digital platform to solicit public comments and will be recorded. As a formal

setting for citizen input, public hearings are recorded and summarized for the record. A summary of comments is provided to LSMPO Board members, prior to Board action. Maps and other visualization tools are displayed at public hearings to present information in a visual way.

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. LSMPO complies with the law’s requirement that the dates and times of meetings be published at the MPO office. In addition, meetings are posted on the www.LakeSumterMPO.com electronic calendar, along with contact information and agendas when available.

Website

The LSMPO 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 LSMPO regarding their plans and programs. Archived presentations of LSMPO and other public meetings are also provided for viewing or download. The website can be accessed at www.LakeSumterMPO.com. E-Mail List

We Want
Your Input!

The Lake~Sumter MPO encourages public comment.

This document is available on the Lake~Sumter website at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Response

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 by e-mail. A summary of comments received will be made as part of the final plan or program. The rationale for policy decisions will be available to the public in writing if requested.

Title VI (Environmental Justice)

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 utilize the FDOT ETDM Tool or other GIS-based analysis to 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 the **Outreach Approach** section 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 are disabled, and in the event of an emergency, LSMPO will hold meetings using a digital platform.

Consistent with the Executive Order 12898, special efforts are undertaken to involve population segments that are traditionally underserved and/or underrepresented in Lake and Sumter counties. These efforts may include the following:

- Identifying geographic locations with a high concentration of the traditionally underserved and underrepresented;
- Hosting traditional workshops convenient to these geographic locations and 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; and
- Meeting with and make presentations to organizations that represent this segment of the population.

The LSMPO Title VI Plan may be reviewed online at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

The LSMPO's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan identifies the LEP populations impacted within the service area. Additionally, the plan sets the guidelines for LSMPO staff to follow to allow information and service accessibility for LEP persons. A copy of the LSMPO's LEP Plan can be found online at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

As a recipient of federal aid funding, LSMPO is required under 49 CFR Part 26.23 to issue a policy statement supporting Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE). LSMPO is committed to this program and implementing relevant objectives throughout the public involvement process. The full policy statement can be found online at www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

OUTREACH TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The LSMPO employs a variety of outreach tools and techniques to reach targeted populations and stakeholder groups depending on the need. These outreach activities may apply to multiple audiences or may be tailored to a specific group. As these public outreach tools and techniques are used, if a particular technique is not a success, MPO staff can discuss the use of other techniques and include them in subsequent updates of the PPP. This will ensure that the best techniques are always being employed. The outreach tools and techniques described in this PPP are shown in **Table 1 - Outreach Tools and Techniques Summary**.

It should be noted that these categories are used herein for general organizational purposes. Most outreach tools and techniques used by the MPO are often not used by themselves but, rather, are paired with others in multiple categories to build a unique strategy for a given outreach effort and achieve optimum results. Further, some tools and techniques may be used/applied for multiple purposes, and thus, fall into multiple categories.

- Program Management consists of the community-focused relationship developed by the MPO throughout project development and how the MPO manages its outreach efforts, including day-to-day contact with the community by the MPO Policy Board, advisory committees, and staff.
- Public Outreach Events are vital to the successful completion of any planning effort. The MPO can use various methods to engage the public and involve them in the participation process, including activities such as public workshops and presentations to community groups.
- Public Notification allows members of the public to be aware of upcoming outreach events, available documents, or opportunities for providing feedback. The MPO uses multiple methods to disseminate information, including email, newspapers, radio, television, and flyers.
- Public Feedback is how the MPO maintains a two-way line of communication, allowing the public to ask questions and provide comments on proposed projects or other MPO planning efforts. These strategies are used to solicit this feedback, often during public outreach events.

Table 1: Outreach Tools and Techniques Summary

Program Management	Public Outreach Events	Public Notification	Public Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPO Policy Board and Advisory Committees • List of Project Priorities (LOPP) Coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public workshops/open houses • Virtual participation • Pop-up events • Training sessions • Presentation to community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailing and email lists • Newsletters and flyers • Radio • Television • Newspaper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos and visualizations • Interactive participation activities • Surveys • Website and email • Comment forms • Verbal comments during meetings • Tracking/feedback mechanism

Public Participation and Notice for Transportation Core Products

Metropolitan planning organizations, such as the LSMPO, are charged under federal law with developing five core products:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Public Participation Plan (PPP)
- List of Priority Projects (LOPP)

Public involvement assists with the facilitation of each of the federally mandated transportation planning documents. How the public is incorporated into advancement of these plans is detailed in the next section including checklists showcasing the ways LSMPO provides notice and involves the public. The processes described in this PPP are utilized during the development of the five core products described below.

Federal Legislation Guiding Public Involvement

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: Participation By Interested Parties

The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan 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 USC 134 § 450.316).

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

The LRTP identifies transportation improvements necessary to maintain adequate mobility and to accommodate growth forecasted over the next twenty (25) years. The current LRTP (Transportation 2045) includes projects through the year 2040. The process includes innovative technical modeling and collaborative public engagement. Public involvement during development of the LRTP is guided by an independent and focused PPP, though strategies and tactics are coordinated with this document to ensure overall continuity.

As required by federal law, a formal public comment period is held prior to Board adoption, providing a structured avenue for public input. The official twenty-one (21) day public comment period for the LRTP follows the same timeline as the advisory committee review. The deadline to submit a comment is included in and notifications associated with the public comment period. This deadline is generally seven (7) days prior to the date Board action is scheduled.

Public notification for the public comment period takes many forms as described in the **Public Involvement Strategies** section. Public comment period notices are also sent to LSMPO's community database. Additionally, draft plan documents are available on LSMPO website and by request at least seven (7) days prior to the start of the public hearing.

Citizens unable to attend a Committee meeting or the Governing Board meeting may submit written public comments to LSMPO during the official public comment period in three (3) additional ways: 1) via postal service, 2) via the Questions & Comments form on the website www.lakesumtermpo.com/engage/questions-comments-email-sign-up/ or 3) by emailing: Michael.Woods@LakeSumterMPO.com.

TABLE 1. *Long Range Transportation Plan Checklist*

Outreach Step	Timeframe
Board approval of the LRTP public outreach before outreach efforts commence	Forty-five (45) day public comment period before adoption
Execution of process laid out in the LSMPO PPP, including feedback from residents conveyed to LSMPO Board and committees from outreach events and other sources	Time varies to coincide with technical work of the plan
Official public comment period, with draft plan documents available on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	At least twenty-one (21) days prior to Board action
Draft plan documents reviewed by MPO advisory committees, with opportunity for public comment at committee meetings	During the meeting cycle prior to Board action
Draft plan documents available in print, by request	At least seven (7) days before the advertised LRTP public hearing
Public hearing notices sent via e-mail to LSMPO’s community database and other notifications made, per Sunshine Law	At least seven (7) days before the LRTP public hearing
A formal public hearing for citizen information and input	Prior to Board adoption
Process for submitting written public comments via postal service, website contact form at www.LakeSumterMPO.com	In place and publicized as soon as documents are available and posted
Board vote (action item) on LRTP adoption with public comment period in advance of Board action at the meeting	First Board meeting following LRTP public hearing
Publication of adopted LRTP on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	As soon as final copies of all documents can be uploaded to website

‘Not Substantial’ Amendments to the LRTP

Amendments are considered as “not substantial” if they only include minor changes to project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects or changes to project phase initiation dates. These types of revisions do not require public review and comment and re-demonstration of fiscal constraint.

Amendments to the LRTP deemed ‘not substantial’ are reviewed by LSMPO’s advisory committees for input and recommendations prior to Board adoption. In addition to the public comment periods provided at each Committee meeting, opportunities for public input are also a standard part of every Board meeting, prior to Board action. The standard Board agenda includes a public comment period prior to action items on the agenda. During the review process and following Board adoption, the proposed amendment is electronically published on: www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

TABLE 2. *LRTP Non-Substantial Amendments Checklist*

Outreach Step	Timeframe
Proposed amendment published electronically on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	At least seven (7) days before committee review
Review by LSMPO advisory committees for input and recommendations, including public comment period at committee meetings	During the meeting cycle prior to the Board action

Board vote on approval, following public comment period at the meeting	First Board meeting following advisory committee review and recommendation
Citizens unable to attend committee or Board meetings are encouraged to submit written comments via postal service, LakeSumterMPO.org contact form, or e-mail	Throughout official public comment period
Approved amendment published on LakeSumterMPO.org	As soon as final copies of document can be uploaded to the website

‘Substantial’ Amendments to the LRTP

Substantial Amendments are revisions that may involve the addition or deletion of a major project or a major change in project cost or a major change in design concept or design scope (changing termini or the number of through traffic lanes, for example). Substantial amendments require public review and comment and re-demonstration of fiscal constraint.

The following actions are potential amendments:

- Adding or deleting a federally funded or regionally significant project, including earmarks;
- Increasing or decreasing the cost of project phases more than the thresholds for administrative modifications established by the FDOT. (See **Appendix D** for “FDOT LRTP Amendment Thresholds”); and
- Making a major change to the scope of work to an existing project. A major change would be any change that alters the original intent (e.g. a change in the number of lanes, a change in the project length more than 20%, or a change in location).

For amendments to the L RTP deemed ‘substantial,’ Lake~Sumter MPO follows a similar public involvement process to the original adoption of the plan, including a formal twenty-one (21) day public comment period after any required technical analysis and review by the organization’s advisory committees for both input and recommendations prior to Board adoption. Public notification of the public comment period for the amendment follows the approved advertisement process. During the review process and following Board adoption, the proposed amendment is electronically published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com.

TABLE 3. *L RTP Substantial Amendments Checklist*

Outreach Step	Timeframe
Proposed amendment published electronically on www.LakeSumterMPO.com and notification of public hearing on the amendment is made as outlined above	At least seven (7) days prior to the public hearing
Review by LSMPO advisory committees for input and recommendations, including public comment period at committee meetings	During the meeting cycle prior to the Board action
Public hearing after any required technical analysis	Prior to Board adoption
Board vote on approval	First Board meeting after public hearing
Citizens unable to attend committee or Board meetings are encouraged to submit written comments via postal service, LakeSumterMPO.org contact form, or e-mail	Throughout official public comment period
Approved amendment published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	As soon as final copies of document can be uploaded to the website

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

The TIP is a five (5) year plan that assigns available funding to specific projects in the near future. LSMPO develops this plan each year in cooperation with the FDOT, which includes a period of review by LSMPO advisory committees.

As required by federal law, a formal public comment period is held prior to Board adoption, providing a structured process for public input. The official public comment period for TIP follows the same timeline as the advisory committee review, with a draft document available at least twenty-one (21) days prior to Board action. The deadline to submit a comment is included in the notification associated with the public comment period. This deadline is generally seven (7) days prior to the date Board action is scheduled.

Public notification for the public comment period takes many forms (see **Outreach Approach** section). Public comment period notices are also sent to LSMPO’s community database. Additionally, draft plan documents are available on LSMPO’s website and in print at locations throughout the region and by request at least seven (7) days prior to the public hearing.

Citizens unable to respond during the public comment period or attend Board meeting may submit written public comments to LSMPO during the official public comment period in three (3) additional ways: 1) via postal service, 2) via the website engagement page at <http://www.lakesumtermpo.com/engage/questions-comments-email-sign-up/> or 3) by emailing: Michael.Woods@LakeSumterMPO.com.

Once adopted, the TIP is made available as a web-based interactive tool located on the LSMPO website: [LakeSumter MPO - TIP \(arcgis.com\)](http://LakeSumterMPO.com).

TABLE 4. *Transportation Improvement Program Checklist*

Outreach Step	Timeframe
Draft TIP project information published on www.LakeSumterMPO.org	Seven (7) days before committee review, opening public comment period
Draft TIP presented at LSMPO advisory committee meetings, with chance for public comment at the meeting	During the meeting cycle prior to Board approval
Public meeting to present draft TIP, maps, other information, with opportunity for public comment	Prior to Board approval
Board vote on approval after public comment period	Typically, the first Board meeting following advisory committee review
Citizens unable to attend committee or Board meetings are encouraged to submit written comments via postal service, LakeSumterMPO.org contact form, or e-mail	Throughout official public comment period
Plan is published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	As soon as final copies of document can be uploaded to the website

TIP Amendments:

Amendments to the TIP are reviewed by LSMPO’s advisory committees for input. In addition to the public comment periods provided during each committee meeting, opportunities for public comment are also a standard part of each Board meeting, prior to Board action. During the review process and following Board adoption, the proposed amendment is electronically published.

Public input considered in the development and maintenance of the TIP includes the comments and recommendations of LSMPO committees and the public at large as well as input received during the public comment periods. LSMPO complies with statutory planning and programming requirements [23 U.S.C 134/49 U.S.C. 5303 (j) (1) and 23 U.S.C. 135/49 U.S.C. 5304 (g) (2)] that call for continuing consultation and coordination with partners, MPOs, and non-metropolitan local officials, and federal and state agencies.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

LSMPO actively assists local governments and transportation agencies in the development and implementation of public participation techniques for transportation planning and other related studies. For example, during the LRTP and TIP development processes, LSMPO will assist Lake County Public Transportation (Lake Xpress) with their Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirement for Section 5307 Program of Projects public involvement by including the following statement in advertisements and/or other collateral materials as appropriate:

Emergency TIP Amendments

Most amendments to the TIP receive a review (as outlined in Table 5) before entering the program. Exceptions are made when an emergency amendment must be approved prior to the next Board meeting for the amended project to receive funding. In these cases, the LSMPO Executive Director is authorized to approve the amendment and sign a corresponding resolution on behalf of the board without having to call an emergency meeting of the Board. The Executive Director’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.

“The MPO’s LRTP/TIP development process is being used to satisfy the public comment period requirements of FTA’s Section 5307 program. This public notice of public involvement activities and the time established for public review and comment on the LRTP/TIP will satisfy the FTA Program of Projects requirements.”

TABLE 5. *Public Participation Checklist for TIP Amendments*

Outreach Step	Timeframe
Proposed amendment published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	Seven (7) days prior to committee review, opening public comment period
Amendment reviewed by LSMPO advisory committees for input, with public comment periods offered at committee meetings	During the meeting cycle prior to Board approval
Board votes on approval, following public comment period	First Board meeting after committee review
Citizens unable to attend committee or Board meetings are encouraged to submit written comments via postal service, www.LakeSumterMPO.com contact form, or e-mail	Throughout official public comment period
Amendment is published on Lake SumterMPO.com	As soon as final copies of document can be uploaded to the website

TABLE 6. *Public Participation Checklist for Emergency TIP Amendments*

Outreach Step	Timeframe
Lake Sumter MPO Board chairman contacted about need for emergency amendment to secure funding	As soon as situation is identified by staff
Lake-Sumter MPO Executive Director signs corresponding resolution on behalf of the Board without calling emergency session	As soon as Executive Director’s schedule permits
Board ratifies approval of the emergency amendment	At next regularly scheduled Board meeting
Amendment is published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	As soon as final copies of document can be uploaded to the website

UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

The UPWP documents the transportation planning activities and associated budget for the LSMPO planning area. Though the document covers a two (2) year period, the UPWP is reviewed annually to refine previously identified tasks and better reflect changes in the economic climate. Prior to Board adoption, the public will be provided with the opportunity to review and comment on the draft UPWP during a twenty-one (21) day public review period. A draft is also presented to the LSMPO advisory committees for input. In addition to the public comment periods provided during each committee meeting, opportunities for public comment are also a standard part of each Board meeting prior to Board action. During this review process and following Board adoption, the UPWP is electronically published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com and is available in print, by request.

Citizens unable to attend the committee or Board meetings may submit written public comments to LSMPO during the official public comment period: 1) via postal service, 2) via the Questions & Comments form on the website www.lakesumtermpo.com/engage/questions-comments-email-sign-up/ or, 3) by emailing: Michael.Woods@LakeSumterMPO.com.

When significant public comments are received on a draft UPWP as a result of public involvement, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final UPWP. If the final UPWP differs significantly from the one made available for public comment or raises new material issues, an additional opportunity for public comment will be made available.

TABLE 7. *Unified Planning Work Program Checklist*

Outreach Step	Timeframe
Draft plan is published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	Seven (7) days prior to committee review, opening public comment period
Draft is presented to MPO advisory committees for input, with public comment periods offered at committee meetings	During the committee meeting cycle prior to Board approval
Board votes on approval, following public comment period at Board meeting	First Board meeting after committee review and recommendation
Citizens unable to attend committee or Board meetings are encouraged to submit written comments via postal service, www.LakeSumterMPO.com contact form, or e-mail	Throughout official public comment period
Plan is published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	As soon as final copies of documents can be uploaded to the website

UPWP REVISIONS

Modifications

UPWP modifications do not change the FHWA approved planning budget or the scope of the FHWA funded work task. There is no formal public comment period for UPWP modifications. Modifying the UPWP does not require FHWA approval; however, LSMPO will notify the FDOT District Liaison when changes are made. The FDOT Liaison will then notify FHWA and FTA.

UPWP Amendments

UPWP amendments change the FHWA approved planning budget, the scope of the FHWA work task, or add or delete a FHWA work task. LSMPO staff will submit all proposed draft UPWP amendments received or initiated by it through the TAC, CAC, advisory committees and for final LSMPO Board for approval. The public is invited to attend and provide comments during each of these meetings at the designated place on the agenda. Proposed draft amendments to the approved UPWP shall be distributed for public review and comment as described in **Outreach Approach** section.

Amending the UPWP does require FHWA approval; LSMPO will submit the approved UPWP document to FDOT and FHWA for their review and approval.

LIST OF PRIORITIZED PROJECTS (LOPP)

LSMPO also has a formal process for prioritizing projects adopted in the LRTP. The result is a document called the List of Prioritized Projects (LOPP). This document is reviewed annually and adopted by the Board. Prior to Board adoption, the public will be provided with the opportunity to review and comment on the draft LOPP during a twenty-one (21) day public review period. The draft LOPP is presented to LSMPO's advisory committees

for input and recommendations. Prior to adoption, the Board receives a report from each committee with input and/or recommendations.

Throughout the process, there are also opportunities for general public comment. In addition to public comment periods during each advisory committee meeting, public comment periods are a standard part of each Board agenda prior to any Board action. During this review process and following Board adoption, the LOPP is electronically published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com and is available in print, by request.

Citizens unable to attend the committee or Governing Board meetings may submit written public comments to LSMPO during the official public comment period: 1) via postal service, 2) via the Questions & Comments form on the website www.lakesumtermpo.com/engage/questions-comments-email-sign-up/ or, 3) by emailing Michael.Woods@LakeSumterMPO.com.

LOPP Amendments:

Amendments to the plan are reviewed by LSMPO’s advisory committees for input. In addition to the public comment periods provided during each committee meeting, opportunities for public comment are also a standard part of each Board meeting, prior to Board action. During the review process and following Board adoption, the proposed amendment is electronically published.

TABLE 8. *List of Prioritized Projects Checklist*

Outreach Step	Timeframe
Draft LOPP published electronically on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	Twenty-one (21) days prior to Board approval, opening public comment period
Draft LOPP presented at LSMPO advisory committee meetings, with public comment during meeting	During the meeting cycle prior to Board approval
Board vote on approval, after public comment period at the meeting and consideration of committee input	First Board meeting after committee review
Citizens unable to attend committee or Board meetings are encouraged to submit written comments via postal service, www.LakeSumterMPO.com contact form, or e-mail	Throughout official public comment period
Approved Prioritized Project List published on www.LakeSumterMPO.com	As soon as final documents can be uploaded to the website

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)

The PPP is defined as part of the transportation planning work program which identifies the public involvement strategies and the outreach activities to be undertaken by the Lake~Sumter MPO. As required by federal law, a formal forty-five (45) day public comment period is held prior to Board adoption of the PPP to offer another avenue of public input. Once adopted, the plan is available on [Public Participation Plan | \(lakesumtermpo.com\)](http://Public Participation Plan | (lakesumtermpo.com)).

PPP Amendments

The PPP can be amended at any time by providing a forty-five (45) day public comment period and the opportunity for public comment on the proposed change in the regular Board and advisory committee meeting cycle. The opportunity to comment on the proposed change will be provided at regularly scheduled and

advertised meetings of the TAC, CAC, and Governing Board. Notice of the proposed change will also be posted on the LSMPO website.

EMERGENCY OR SPECIAL MEETINGS

The Chair may call for an emergency meeting for the purpose of acting upon emergency matters affecting the public health, safety, and welfare. In the event of a statewide emergency, an emergency meeting or special meeting can be held using digital means and will be recorded in its entirety. Such meeting agenda shall be prepared by the Chair. The agenda and supporting documents shall be made available to the members at least one (1) day prior to the meeting. Meeting agenda shall be posted at the site of the meeting and on the LSMPO website at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting and emailed to all members. Minutes of the emergency meeting will be posted to the LSMPO website within twenty-four (24) hours of the meeting and a full review of approved items will be discussed at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Program Evaluation

Each year, the MPO assesses the effectiveness of its techniques and strategies to ensure that funds, time, and effort are being efficiently invested in the public participation process. The MPO measures its overall performance in this area when developing its Public Involvement Annual Report.

This goal is pursued through five (5) central objectives, including:

1. Advisory Committee Involvement
2. Information Accessibility
3. Feedback in the Process
4. Outreach Tools and Techniques
5. Public Input on Public Transit

To carry out an effective PPP, it is necessary to follow focused engagement methods throughout the transportation planning process. These methods are more clearly defined through a goal, strategy, and performance measurement framework which is presented in this section of the document.

Performance measurement: Federal regulation requires that LSMPO evaluate the effectiveness of its PPP on a regular basis. In evaluating its plan, LSMPO may determine to stop using 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 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. Performance measures are linked with each of the strategies in this section and provide the guidelines for evaluating public involvement techniques identified in the PPP. Additional methods and media outreach to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) non-English speaking populations will be developed as part of the LSMPO's LEP Program.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies: The following pages describe the goals, objectives and strategies with action items and measures utilized by LSMPO to solicit and encourage public involvement in the transportation planning process.

GOAL #1: ADVISORY COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

To hold regular public meetings with its standing advisory committees and obtain their input on all documents, projects, and funding determinations prior to consideration by the LSMPO Board.

Objectives

The following strategies and performance measures listed in **Table 9** describe the efforts pursued to support advisory committee participation and involvement:

- **Objective 1.1:** Ensure the majority of all advisory committee positions are filled during the course of the year.
- **Objective 1.2:** By 2025, fill a minimum of 10% of CAC positions with representatives that are from traditionally underserved or underrepresented populations which may include members from the Transportation Disadvantaged Community.
- **Objective 1.3:** Post meeting notices and deliver information to advisory committee at least seven (7) days prior to meetings.
- **Objective 1.4:** Ensure 100% of advisory committee recommendations or actions are logged and subsequently presented to LSMPO Board.
- **Objective 1.5:** Evaluate public participation activities and techniques in the PPP and prepare an annual report to the LSMPO Board with an analysis of the effectiveness of the PPP.

TABLE 9. *PPP Objective #1 Measures*

Strategy	Actions/Measures
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regularly advertise open positions through various channels such as the MPO's website, newsletters and community events.
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct outreach programs specifically targeting underrepresented communities to encourage participation.
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure 80% of advisory committee meeting notices and information are sent at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. ▪ LSMPO staff members meet regularly with the Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Alliance staff members to discuss regional issues and provide that input to the advisory committees.
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement a standardized process for documenting and tracking committee recommendations and actions.
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop assessment criteria to measure the effectiveness of various public participation activities and techniques. ▪ Present findings to the LSMPO Board along with recommendations for enhancing the PPP's effectiveness.

GOAL #2: INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY

To provide equitable public access to information regarding transportation decision making.

Objectives

The following strategies and measures listed in **Table 10** strive to inform the public on the transportation planning process and offer opportunities for public comment:

- **Objective 2.1:** Schedule meetings and events at convenient times and locations near fixed-route bus stops, offering both in-person and virtual attendance options whenever possible.
- **Objective 2.2:** Accommodate 100% of requests for ADA accessibility.
- Provide access for persons with disabilities to obtain information and participate in MPO events and meetings, including virtual participation as available.
- **Objective 2.3:** Plan public involvement activities and events to be geographically dispersed throughout the LSMPO area.
- **Objective 2.4:** Focus public involvement activities and events to target a diverse group of participants.
- **Objective 2.5:** Produce public information in a format that is engaging and easily accessible for traditionally underserved populations and is ADA accessible.

TABLE 10. *PPP Objective #2 Measures*

Strategy	Actions/Measures
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate public meetings in neighborhoods located within the study area for specific transportation projects. ▪ Meetings are held virtually as appropriate.
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100% of meetings, events and project-related information sources are accessible to persons with disabilities, as requested.
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meetings for the LRTP, special regional public meetings and/or regional workshops are provided within each of the MPO's five subareas (see map in Appendix B). ▪ At least one (1) meeting or opportunity is located in each affected area in the LSMPO region (pertains to corridor or area-specific actions).
2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual public meetings target underserved groups including, including people with low-income, people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), people who are transit dependent, people of color, older adults, and people with disabilities, within the study area.
2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In areas with Limited English Proficiency, materials are produced in the predominant non-English language. ▪ Translators or local community representatives are available at public meetings and outreach activities in areas where a high proportion of the population is non-English speaking to help facilitate the discussions. ▪ Provide a mechanism by which disabled citizens/groups can request accessible materials that are specific to their needs. For example, the visually impaired may desire audio information, or the hearing impaired may desire written information.

GOAL #3: FEEDBACK IN THE PROCESS

To engage the public early, often, and with clarity so that opportunities exist for public feedback in the transportation decision making process.

Objectives

The LSMPO recognizes the importance of obtaining feedback from members of the community and will pursue the following strategies and measures listed in **Table 11** to encourage and obtain feedback:

- **Objective 3.1:** Respond to public inquiries within seven (7) working days of the date of receipt.
- **Objective 3.2:** Make meeting notices and information available at least five (5) days prior to meetings.
- **Objective 3.3:** Provide follow-up information to individuals or groups.
- **Objective 3.4:** Incorporate public feedback into transportation decision making.

TABLE 11. *PPP Objective #3 Measures*

Strategy	Action/Measures
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 75% of all responses to public inquiries are made within seven (7) working days of receipt date.
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 80% of public meeting notices are sent at least five (5) days prior to the meeting.▪ 80% of public meeting information is made available at least five (5) days prior to the meeting.
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ For corridor/site specific projects, the Public Involvement Summary will include a narrative describing how public comment shaped the selected alternative/decision.▪ LSMPO staff will provide written responses to questions or comments from public meetings within seven (7) working days.
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A record of public comments and how they were integrated into the transportation planning process is maintained by LSMPO staff.▪ LSMPO staff will conduct project-specific surveys to evaluate public needs and obtain input into the project recommendations.

GOAL #4: OUTREACH TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

To use a variety of methods to involve and engage the public.

Objectives

The LSMPO public involvement process seeks to regularly engage the community. The following strategies and measures listed in **Table 12** seek to facilitate this process:

- **Objective 4.1:** Utilize various public involvement techniques including virtual meetings.
- **Objective 4.2:** Enable public information accessibility in languages other than English, as appropriate, or in other means to address disabilities.
- **Objective 4.3:** Employ various website tools to provide information and gather input.
- **Objective 4.4:** MPO will maintain a reasonably current and up-to-date database of contacts to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products.

TABLE 12. *PPP Objective #4 Measures*

Strategy	Action/Measure
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple techniques are used to involve/engage the public in decision making (e.g. ads, website, meetings). ▪ All LSMPO announcements and meeting materials are posted to the LSMPO website at least five (5) days prior to meetings and events.
4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When requested, and with seventy-two (72) hour notice, the LSMPO will provide meeting notices in other languages. ▪ When requested, and with seventy-two (72) hour notice, the LSMPO will provide meeting notices in a format to accommodate visual disabilities. ▪ In specific geographic areas for specific community meetings, 100% of presentation materials are produced in a language other than English (as needed). ▪ LSMPO staff utilize maps and other visual techniques to convey information.
4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize multiple website tools (e.g., surveys, comment forms, interactive calendars) for public engagement. ▪ Translate LSMPO website pages into languages other than English using tools like Google Translate. ▪ Develop and monitor project-specific web pages to collect public feedback.
4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LSMPO will use Google Translate, or other readily available translation tool/app, to ensure all pages of the LSMPO website can be accessed in languages other than English. ▪ Project specific web pages are developed and tracked as a method to gather public feedback.
4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LSMPO maintains and continuously updates a database of contacts including a minimum of the following individuals and agencies to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Government Staff ▪ Transportation Agencies (port, airports, transit, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » <i>Local Media</i> » <i>Homeowners' Associations</i> » <i>Civic Groups</i> » <i>Special Interest Groups</i>

- Additional interested parties, including as those below, are identified and added to the outreach database annually:
 - » *Federal, state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural Resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation and other environmental entities*
 - » *Public Land Managers*
 - » *Private Freight Shippers*
 - » *Representatives of Public Transportation Employees*
 - » *Providers of Freight Transportation Services*
 - » *Private Providers of Transportation*
 - » *Representatives of Users of Public Transportation*
 - » *Pedestrian Representatives*
 - » *Representatives of Bicyclists*
 - » *Representatives of people with all abilities*

- 4.6**
- Review, update and document database revisions on an annual basis to ensure inclusion of:
 - Local Government Staff
 - Transportation Agencies (port, airports, transit, etc.)
 - » *Local Media*
 - » *Homeowners' Associations*
 - » *Civic Groups*
 - » *Special Interest Groups*
 - » *Public Land Managers*
 - Additional interested parties, including as those below, are identified and added to the outreach database annually:
 - » *Federal, state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation and other environmental issues*
 - » *Public Land Managers*
 - » *Private Freight Shippers*
 - » *Representatives of Public Transportation Employees*
 - » *Providers of Freight Transportation Services*
 - » *Private Providers of Transportation*
 - » *Representatives of Users of Public Transportation*
 - » *Pedestrian Representatives*
 - » *Representatives of Bicyclists*
 - Representatives of people with all abilities

GOAL #5: PUBLIC INPUT ON PUBLIC TRANSIT

To provide opportunities for the public to provide input on the Lake County Section 5307 Program of Projects (POP).

Objectives

Public transportation is important for residents within Lake County and Sumter County and LSMPO facilitates ways to obtain input on this service. The following strategies and measures listed in **Table 13** seek to enable this feedback:

- **Objective 5.1:** Request the Lake County Section 5307 POP.
- **Objective 5.2:** Include POP with the LSMPO LOPP and present at the CAC, TAC, and LSMPO Policy Board meetings in 4th quarter of the LSMPO fiscal year. The public will have the opportunity to:
 - » Provide input on the POP.
 - » Be involved in prioritizing of the POP for funding.
- **Objective 5.3:** Increase input opportunities for the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB) on LSMPO programs and plans.

TABLE 13. *PPP Objective #5 Measures*

Strategy	Action/Measure
5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request annually (by May 1) Lake County Section 5307 POP for the following fiscal year. ▪ Request annually (by June 1) a copy of the Section 5307 POP advertisement in the local newspaper.
5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request (by March 1) a representative from Lake County Public Transit attend the June CAC, TAC, and LSMPO Policy Board meetings when the LOPP and POP are discussed. ▪ Request (at least fourteen days prior) a representative from Lake County Public Transit attends the CAC, TAC, and LSMPO Policy Board meetings when a TIP Amendment for public transit funding is considered.
5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the Lake County Section 5307 POP and LOPP with the TDCB. ▪ Present information on other transit-related projects underway to the TDCB during the quarterly meetings and obtain feedback. ▪ On an annual basis, review any transit service grievances that may have been filed and incorporate improvement strategies into transit planning projects or programs as appropriate.

The PPP reflects the LSMPO’s commitment to honesty, integrity, and transparency 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.

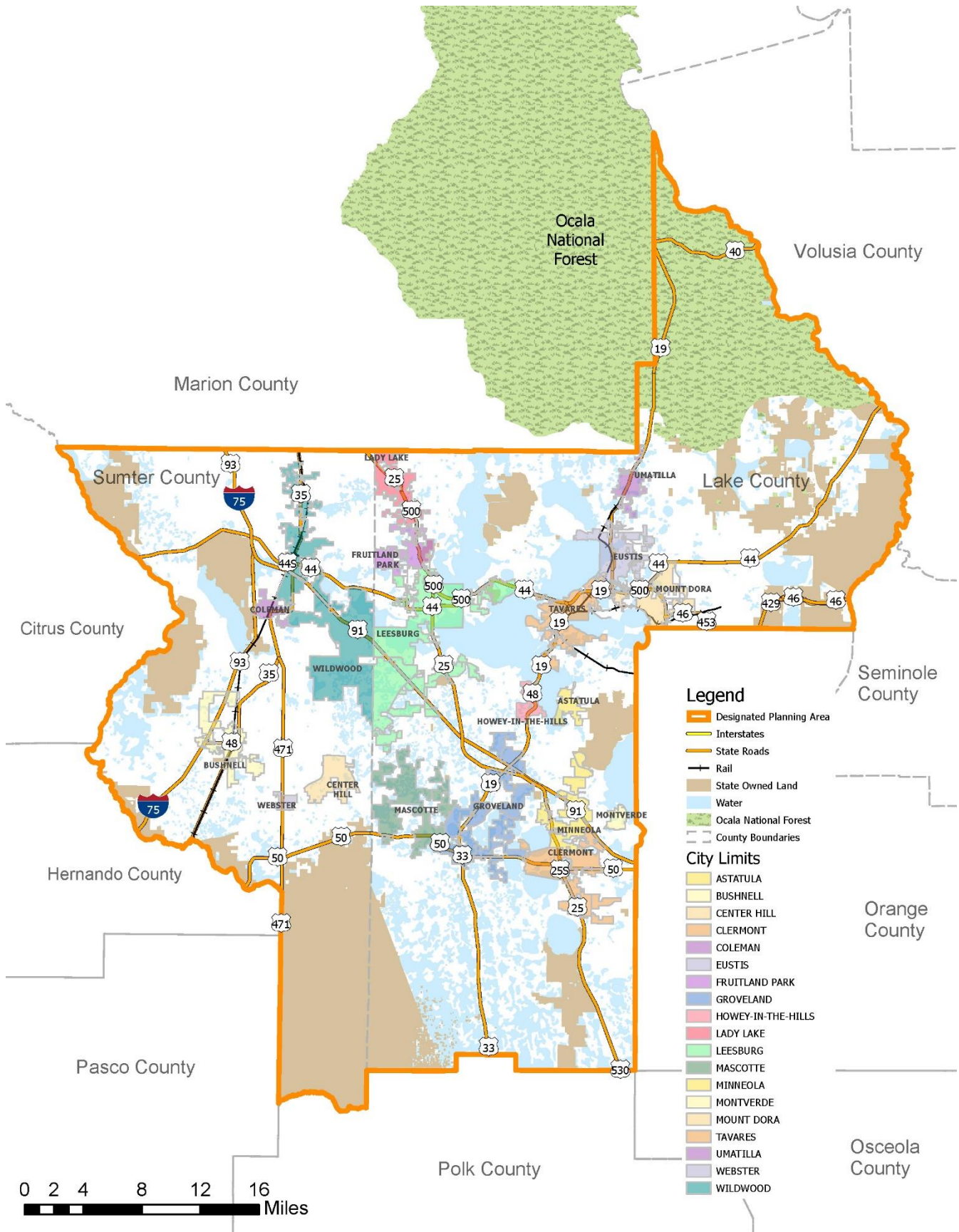
Appendix A: PPP OUTREACH LOG



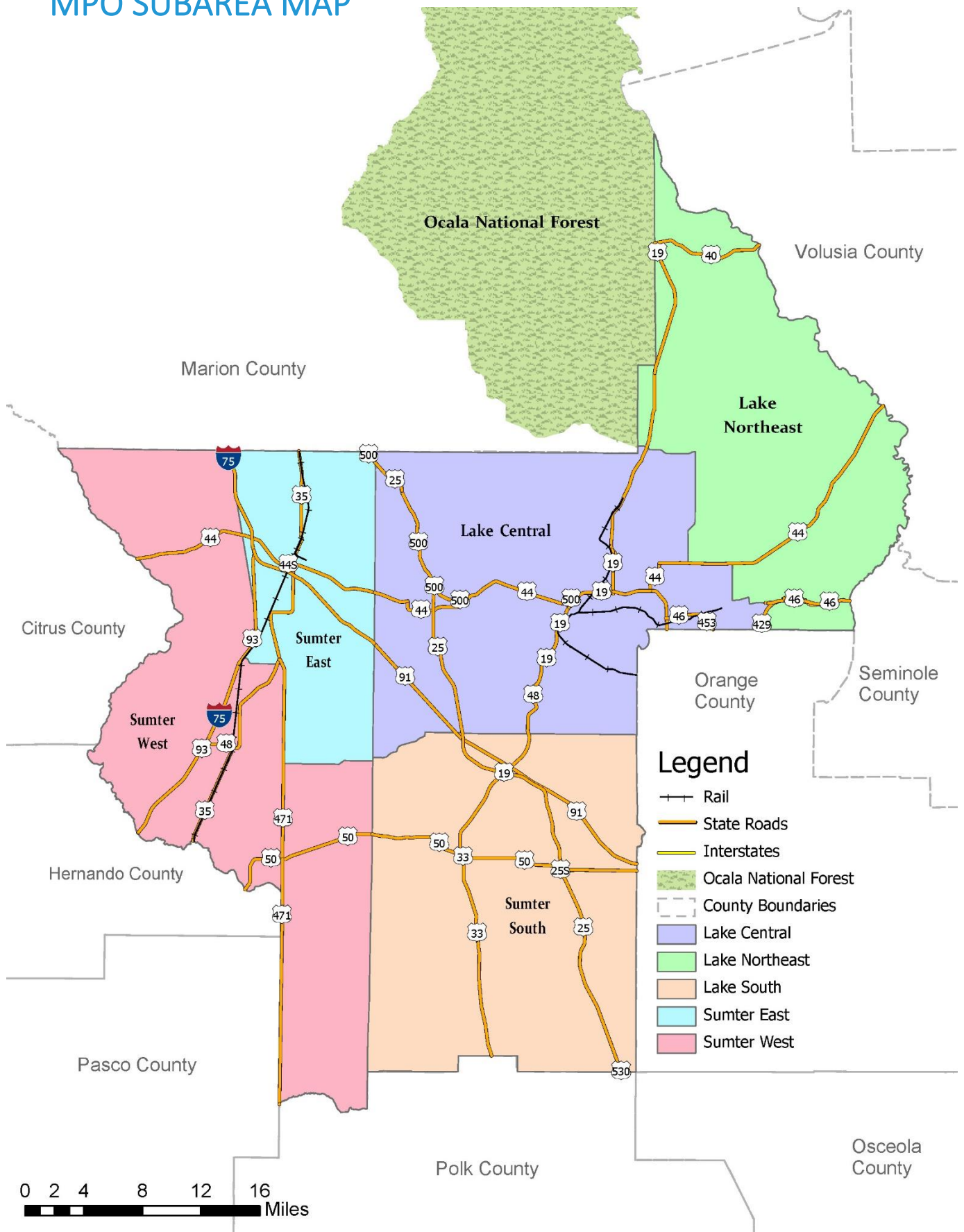
LAKE~SUMTER MPO OUTREACH LOG

DATE	REQUEST (INQUIRY/EVENT)	STAFF PERSON	PURPOSE/ACTION	NOTES

Appendix B: MPO PLANNING AREA MAP



MPO SUBAREA MAP



Appendix C: TRANSPORTATION ACRONYM GUIDE

ACRONYM	NAME / TITLE
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AMPO	Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
BIL	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
CAC	Community Advisory Committee
CCI	Community Characteristics Inventory
CFMPOA	Central Florida MPO Alliance
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
DOT	Department of Transportation
ECFRPC	East Central Florida Regional Planning Council
EEO	Equal Opportunity Employer
F.S.	Florida Statute
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LOPP	List of Priority Projects
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
LSMPO	Lake~Sumter MPO
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MPOAC	Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council
PEA	Planning Emphasis Areas
PI	Public Involvement
PIO	Public Information Office (or Officer)
RPC	Regional Planning Council
RTA	Regional Transit Authority
SBE	Small Business Enterprise
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee

ACRONYM	NAME / TITLE
TCEA	Transportation Concurrency Exception Area
TCMA	Transportation Concurrency Management Area
TD	Transportation Disadvantaged
TDCB	Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board
TDP	Transit Development Plan
TDSP	Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan
TE	Transportation Enhancements
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Area
TMS	Transportation Management System
TOP	Transit Operations Plan
TPO	Transportation Planning Organizations (synonym to MPO)
TRIP	Transportation Regional Incentive Program
UA	Urbanized Area
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
USC	United States Code
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
WBE	Women's Business Enterprise
WPRC	Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council
YTD	Year to Date

APPENDIX D: FLORIDA LRTP AMENDMENT THRESHOLDS

Complete Excerpt of Florida LRTP Amendment Thresholds Issued March 5, 2014:

Section 1. Florida LRTP Amendment Thresholds

The guidance in this section sets the minimum thresholds for project changes that trigger an LRTP Amendment at the time of STIP approval, a STIP amendment or NEPA approval. Even if a project change does not require an amendment, an MPO may still elect to do an amendment at its option if appropriate circumstances warrant. For determining TIP/STIP/LRTP/NEPA consistency for approval of a NEPA document, please refer to Section 2. NEPA Consistency and Approval and the 2018 LRTP Expectations Letter for additional details. This document was jointly prepared by FDOT and the FHWA Florida Division.

The following acronyms are used:

- CFP – Cost Feasible Plan
- CST – Construction Phase
- FDOT – Florida Department of Transportation
- FHWA – Federal Highway Administration
- LRTP – Long Range Transportation Plan
- MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization
- NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act
- PD&E – Project Development and Environment Phase
- PE – Preliminary Engineering Phase
- ROW – Right of Way Phase
- SIS – Strategic Intermodal System
- STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program
- TIP – Transportation Improvement Program

LRTP AMENDMENTS

Project Cost Changes that Require an LRTP Amendment

An LRTP amendment will be required for LRTP cost increases that exceed 50% of project cost and \$50 million.

When assessing project cost changes (including project costs documented in NEPA documents), the cost of the project includes the phases after the PD&E which, for purposes of this document, are Design/PE, ROW and Construction phases.

Other Changes that Require an LRTP Amendment

- Design Concept or Scope Changes: A major change in the project termini (e.g. expansion) or a change in a project concept(s) such as adding a bridge, addition of lanes, addition of an interchange, etc.

- Deleting a full project from the CFP.
- Adding a new project where no phases are currently listed in the CFP.
- Projects or Project Phase Initiation Date for projects in the CFP:
 - » Advancing a project phase from the 3rd 5 years and the last 10-year band of the LRTP to the TIP/STIP years; advancing a project more than one 5-year band (see table with LRTP amendment examples below).
 - » Adding a phase to an existing CFP project (e.g. if ROW is funded, adding CST Phase) where (1) the new phase is funded in the TIP/STIP years/1st 5-year band of the LRTP and (2) one or more phases of a different project must be deferred to a later band or to the Needs/Illustrative List in order to demonstrate fiscal constraint.
 - » For advancing phases of minor projects, please see the LRTP Modifications section.
- Projects or Project Phase Initiation Date for projects beyond the CFP:
 - » Moving a new project from a Needs or Illustrative List to the CFP where no phases are currently listed in the CFP.
 - » Moving new phases from a Needs or Illustrative List to an existing CFP project where (1) the new phase is funded in the TIP/STIP years/1st 5-year band of the LRTP and (2) one or more phases of a different project must be deferred to a later band or to the Needs/Illustrative List in order to demonstrate fiscal constraint.

LRTP Amendment Examples				
CFP				Needs
1 st 5-yr band TIP/STIP years	2 nd 5-yr band	3 rd 5-yr band	Last (10-yr) band	Needs/ Illustrative List
TO	←	←	←	
TO	←	←	←	
	TO	←	←	
TO ANY BAND				←
				FROM

LRTP MODIFICATIONS

Changes that are less significant than those above that trigger an LRTP amendment would only require a modification. These include:

- Design Concept or Scope Changes: A minor change in the project termini equal to or less than 10% of the total project, i.e., adjusting length for turn lane tapers.
- Identification of planned use of Federal funds for existing CFP projects if Federal funds are added to a project funded with only state or local funds in the adopted LRTP.
- Project or Project Phase Initiation Date:
 - » Advancing a project from a 5- or 10-year band to an adjacent 5-year band beyond the TIP/STIP years/1st 5-yr band.

- » Adding a new phase to an existing CFP project (e.g. if ROW is funded, adding CST Phase) where the new phase is funded beyond the TIP/STIP years/1st 5-year band of the LRTP.
- » Adding a new phase to an existing CFP project (e.g. if ROW is funded, adding CST Phase) from a Needs or Illustrative list to the CFP where the new phase is funded beyond the TIP/STIP years/1st 5-year band of the LRTP.
- » Adding a new phase to an existing CFP project (e.g. if ROW is funded, adding CST Phase) from a Needs or Illustrative list to the CFP where (1) the new phase is funded in the TIP/STIP years/1st 5-year band of the LRTP and (2) the added phases use new funds not contained in the LRTP Revenue Forecast to the CFP

LRTP Modification Examples				
CFP				Needs
1 st 5-yr band TIP/STIP years	2 nd 5-yr band	3 rd 5-yr band	Last (10-yr) band	Needs/ Illustrative List
TO ←	FROM			
	TO ←	FROM		
		TO ←	FROM	

Advancing Phases for Minor Projects

Projects and/or project phases of \$5 million or less can be moved from any 5-yr band to any 5-yr band by modification to the LRTP.

BACKGROUND AND RELATED INFORMATION

TIP/STIP Consistency with LRTP

TIP/STIPs are required to be consistent with LRTPs {23 CFR 450.216(k) and 23 CFR 450.324(g)}. The TIP/STIP is consistent with the LRTP when:

- TIP/STIP project costs are within 50% and \$50 million of projects costs shown in the LRTP.
- TIP/STIP initiation phase is within the first two 5-year bands of the LRTP.
- Project Scope (including termini, number of lanes, interchanges, etc.,) is consistent between the TIP/STIP and LRTP. Project Termini may have minor variations if there is no major scope change.

For initial STIP approval, TIPs are incorporated into the STIP unchanged {23 CFR 450.216(b)}.

NEPA Consistency and Approval

A NEPA document is consistent with the LRTP and STIP/TIP when:

- NEPA discussion of the project implementation reflects the planning documents in these areas: scope, cost, general funding sources, description, and logical termini.
- An amendment to either the LRTP or STIP/TIP is NOT needed.
- The limits in the NEPA document (logical termini) are addressed in the LRTP CFP or Needs Plan, regardless of the implementing constructible segments.

Modifications should occur to the STIP/TIP or LRTP prior to NEPA approval whenever possible. However, modifications may be completed after the NEPA signature in accordance with the state and MPO established planning procedures. The NEPA document must provide reasonable assurances that the changes will occur as noted in the Commitments and Recommendations Section of the NEPA document.

For the final NEPA document to be signed:

In an MPO area

- The project must be described within the LRTP. The description, at a minimum, must include roadway identification, termini, implementation time frame and full project cost.
- Ideally, all phases of the project will be funded in the LRTP CFP.
- At least one subsequent phase of the entire project must be in the LRTP CFP. If the next phase for the entire project is not in the CFP, then at least one segment of the project must be fully funded in the CFP through construction.
- The information that is then displayed in the TIP/STIP would depend on the timing of the programming for the next phase of the project implementation.

In a non-MPO area

- The project must be consistent with the Florida Transportation Plan.
- If the project is on the SIS, the SIS 10-Year CFP may be used to show the project's planned implementation. If the project is not on the SIS, other publicly available long-range considerations may be used to show the project's planned implementation, such as local government comprehensive plans.
- The project or phase of a project must be in the STIP. If funding of the project is beyond the timeframe of the STIP, the STIP must contain an informational project with a description of the subsequent phase(s) as reflected in the SIS 10 Year Plan full project cost information or other long range public planning documents.

Review and Revision of Florida LRTP Amendment Thresholds

This guidance will be reviewed and revised as needed should the state be subject to Air Quality Conformity requirements. The effectiveness of this document will be evaluated after a one-year implementation period which ends in October 2014. Revisions as agreed upon by the parties will be made as needed. This guidance sets the minimum thresholds for project changes that trigger an LRTP Amendment. Even if a project change does not require an amendment, an MPO may still elect to do an amendment at its option if appropriate circumstances warrant.

Official PDF File located Online:

https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/content/planning/policy/metrosupport/resources/lrtpthreshhold.pdf?sfvrsn=724f5f45_0

APPENDIX E: FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following is excerpted from the MPO Management Handbook's Chapter 6: Public Involvement.

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, 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 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.