



# Public Involvement Report

Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning  
Organization

*Anticipated Adoption: June 22, 2022*



[www.LakeSumterMPO.com](http://www.LakeSumterMPO.com)

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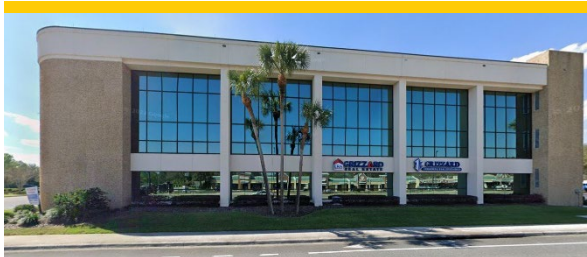
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**For more information about the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization or to learn about ways to get involved, please contact:**



**Lake~Sumter MPO Office**  
1300 Citizens Boulevard  
Leesburg, FL 34748  
Phone: (352) 315-0170  
Fax: (352) 315-0993  
Web: [www.LakeSumterMPO.com](http://www.LakeSumterMPO.com)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Public participation is central to the Lake~Sumter MPO's (LSMPO) mission of providing the local governments, agencies and residents of Lake and Sumter counties a forum for addressing growth and transportation issues. The LSMPO has adopted a Public Participation Plan (PPP) to provide a process that ensures opportunities for the public to be involved in all phases of the LSMPO planning process. The current PPP was adopted in 2018 and subsequently amended in 2019 and 2020.

The PPP calls for an assessment of public participation techniques through the creation of an annual report to the Governing Board that quantifies the results of the public involvement efforts from the past year. The purpose of this report is therefore to document and assess the Lake-Sumter MPO's public involvement efforts undertaken during the 2021 Fiscal Year (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) to understand the effectiveness of current public involvement initiatives and identify areas for improvement.

This report summarizes all public outreach efforts and tools used during Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and evaluates them against the Objectives, Strategies, and Measures outlined in the PPP, as well as the policies related to Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Title VI and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plans. Recommendations for improving public engagement are offered based on this evaluation and will be used to inform updates to the PPP. Moving forward, this report will be developed annually to help gauge the LSMPO's outreach strategies and to provide continuous and data-driven improvements to the PPP.



**Figure 1: MPO Field Study**

## 1.1. Overview of Public Involvement

The LSMPO held or participated in 39 outreach events during the 2021 Fiscal Year (FY), including committee meetings, board meetings, stakeholder meetings, and public workshops. These events provided opportunities for the public to provide feedback in the planning process, garnering about 60 public comments across all events. A full list of all public involvement events is included in Appendix A.

Committee meetings are the primary method of sharing information with the public and gathering input, as they provide consistent opportunities for community feedback. Lake~Sumter MPO hosts bi-monthly meetings for the Governing Board, Technical Advisory Committee, and Community Advisory Committee, all of which are open to the public, provide for virtual participation, and include an agenda item for public comment. The MPO's core planning documents—the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), Unified Public Work Plan (UPWP), List of Priority Projects (LOPP), and Public Participation Plan (PPP)—are presented at committee meetings, giving the public an opportunity to comment on them before final versions are approved by the Governing Board.

The MPO also hosts public workshops and stakeholder meetings, to encourage the public to participate in and provide input on specific transportation projects or plans. In FY 2021, the LSMPO conducted public workshops for the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan, as well as two transportation planning projects, the Innovation Trail Study Project and the SR 471 Complete Streets Study. The LSMPO also conducted targeted outreach to underserved communities, most notably through the quarterly Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB) meetings.

In addition to outreach events and committee meetings, the MPO used a variety of tools and techniques to engage the public, including the LSMPO website, Facebook, and the mailing list. Surveys were conducted for specific planning projects, including the Innovation Trail Study Project and the SR 471 Complete Streets Study.

## 1.2. COVID-19 Impact on Public Involvement

The LSMPO typically hosts in-person public meetings and workshops as part of their public involvement efforts. However, the COVID-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented challenge for public involvement as in-person events came to a sudden halt in March 2020 following the spread of COVID-19 in the United States. The LSMPO maintained a public involvement process by moving all in-person events to virtual events and amending the bylaws to adjust quorum requirements when necessary. As the landscape of the pandemic shifted, the LSMPO again adapted by holding meetings with limited in-person attendance and continuing to offer the option for virtual participation.







## 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) REVIEW

The goal of the LSMPO PPP is to establish an on-going process through which citizen input is regularly identified and considered in the development of MPO plans, projects, and policies. The following five objectives provide the framework for working towards this goal:

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








The PPP outlines strategies that describe the efforts the MPO will pursue to support each Objective, with associated performance measures for each strategy. This section compares public engagement efforts from FY 2021 to the PPP's Performance Measures to analyze the effectiveness of the LSMPO's outreach strategies. The icons below signify whether the performance measures were met, exceeded, need improvement, or if data was not tracked or was not applicable.

				N/A
Exceeded Measure	Met Measure	Needs Improvement	Data Not Tracked	Not Applicable

## 2.1. Objective 1: Advisory Committee Involvement

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








TABLE 1. *Objective 1 Performance Measures and Evaluation*

Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
<b>1.1: Ensure advisory committee positions are filled.</b>	1.1.1: Maintain 80% of all committee positions filled during the course of the year.	90% of CAC positions were filled throughout the year, and 69% of TAC positions were filled throughout the year.	
<b>1.2: Engage members of traditionally underserved communities to participate on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)</b>	1.2.1: By 2021, fill 20% of CAC positions with representatives that are from traditionally underserved or underrepresented populations.	Data not tracked.	
<b>1.3: Post meeting notices and deliver information to advisory committee at least seven (7) days prior to meetings.</b>	1.3.1: Ensure 80% of advisory committee meeting notices and information are sent at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.	All committee meeting minutes stated that the meeting was properly noticed.	
	1.3.2: 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.	LSMPO staff members attended Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Alliance meetings on 7/10/2020, 10/9/2020, and 4/9/2021.	
<b>1.4: Present advisory committee recommendations / actions to LSMPO Board.</b>	1.4.1: 100% of advisory committee recommendations or actions are logged and subsequently presented to LSMPO Board.	The MPO shares all Committee recommendations and outcomes of votes to approve with the Board.	
<b>1.5: Strive to continuously improve the PPP and ensure that public feedback is considered in the transportation decision making process.</b>	1.5.1: LSMPO shall evaluate public participation activities and techniques in the PPP and prepare an annual report to the LSMPO Board in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the PPP.	First annual report prepared for FY 2021.	
	1.5.2: The PPP shall be reviewed and adopted, with revisions, if necessary, every three (3) years.	PPP was adopted on April 25, 2018 amended on August 26, 2020.	




## 2.2. Objective 2: Information Accessibility



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

TABLE 2. *Objective 2 Performance Measures and Evaluation*

Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
<b>2.1: Schedule meetings and events at convenient times and locations, including virtual meetings in times of crisis.</b>	2.1.1: At least 75% of participants and invitees stated the meeting or event was held at a convenient time and location. This feedback can be obtained formally or informally.	Data not tracked.	
	2.1.2: Attend or sponsor at least two (2) transportation-related public events per year in the evening or on a weekend. These could be general events or events specific to publicizing a LSMPO plan or document.	The following public meetings or workshops were held in the evening: Innovation Trail Study Meeting Public Meeting (5:30 pm), LRTP Public Workshops (4:00 pm and 6:00 pm), Community Workshop for the SR 471 Complete Streets Study (6:00 pm).	
	2.1.3: Plan specific public meetings to be held in neighborhood facilities located within the study area for specific transportation projects or LSMPO planning document updates.	Community Workshop for the SR 471 Complete Streets Study was held in Webster, FL and Innovation Trail Study Public Information Meeting was held in Mount Dora, FL.	
	2.1.4: Meetings are held virtually in times of crisis as needed.	The Lake-Sumter MPO held all meetings virtually in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	
<b>2.2: Provide access for persons with disabilities to obtain information and participate in MPO events and meetings, including virtual participation as available.</b>	2.2.1: 100% of disabled persons who requested accommodations are provided accommodation to meet their needs. This could include access via a virtual meeting.	The LSMPO accommodated all requests by persons with disabilities, which included helping a visually impaired member access the Lake County TDCB meetings and providing three TDCB Board members with service dogs their own positions at the table with name plates.	
	2.2.2: 100% of meetings, events and project-related information sources are accessible to persons with disabilities as requested.	All MPO meetings are located on the fixed route transit system, which is ADA accessible. TD meetings are eligible rides on the paratransit system.	
<b>2.3: Plan public involvement activities and events to be geographically dispersed throughout the LSMPO area.</b>	2.3.1: Meetings for the LRTP, special regional public meetings and/or regional workshops are provided in at least three (3) separate areas of the LSMPO region.	LRTP workshops were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	











Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
	2.3.2: At least one (1) meeting or opportunity is located in each affected area in the LSMPO region (pertains to corridor or area-specific actions).	An Innovation Trail Study Public Information Meeting was held in Mount Dora and a Community Workshop for the SR 471 Complete Streets Study was held in Webster.	
<b>2.4: Focus public involvement activities and events to target a diverse group of participants.</b>	2.4.1: Public meetings specifically designed and held for targeted and underserved groups, e.g., elderly, disabled, low-income, and other minorities are held at least once per year.	The Lake County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB) Public Hearing and Sumter County TDCB Public Hearing were held on June 7, 2021.	
	2.4.2: At least 75% of those informally surveyed at the neighborhood/homeowner's meetings agree that the presentation was effective in providing information and gathering input.	Not applicable, MPO did not present at any neighborhood or homeowner's meetings.	N/A
	2.4.3: Target audiences will be identified for each planning study conducted by the MPO, including residents, business and property owners, and people who are traditionally underserved and underrepresented, 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.	Stakeholders were identified for the LRTP, including local agencies, adjacent MPO/TPOs, FDOT, and appropriate federal, state and local land management, resource, environmental, and historic preservation agencies. Environmental Justice populations were also identified, and an Environmental Justice workshop was provided to the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Boards.	
		Stakeholders were identified for the Innovation Trail Study Project and were invited to the public meetings. A composite equity score was calculated and mapped to show areas with above average underserved populations.  The SR 471 Complete Streets Study held a community workshop for local residents as well as a stakeholder meeting with the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway group.	
<b>2.5: Produce public information in a format that is engaging and easily accessible for traditionally underserved populations.</b>	2.5.1: In areas with Limited English Proficiency, materials are produced in the predominant non-English language.	No materials were requested and therefore not provided.	N/A
	2.5.2: Translators or local community representatives are available at public meetings, outreach activities in areas where a high proportion of the population is non-English speaking to help facilitate the discussions.	No translators were requested and therefore not provided.	N/A




Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
	2.5.3: Provide a mechanism by which disabled citizens/groups are able to 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.	All interested citizens are welcome to attend meetings. Persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of the proceedings should call 352-315-0170 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting. This statement is on all MPO agendas.	
	2.5.4: Ensure that newly created plans and documents are posted on the website in an ADA accessible format.	<p>Adobe Accessibility Reports of the LSMPO's core planning documents found problems in 4 out of 5 documents that could prevent them from being fully accessible. On average, about 6 of 32 criteria failed the accessibility checker, with the majority of criteria passing the accessibility checker in all documents.</p> <p>The Accessibility Report found no problems in the PPP.</p>	

## 2.3. Objective 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.

TABLE 3. *Objective 3 Performance Measures and Evaluation*








Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
<b>3.1: Respond to public inquiries within seven (7) working days of the date of receipt.</b>	3.1.1: 75% of all responses to public inquiries are made within seven (7) working days of receipt date.	Data not tracked.	
	3.1.2: 75% of all responses to media inquiries are made within one (1) working day of receipt date.	Many of the local newspapers call the Executive Director to weigh in on projects or plans, who takes their calls as received. The Executive Director responds to any inquiries via email or website within 2 days.	
<b>3.2: Make meeting notices and information available at least five (5) days prior to meetings.</b>	3.2.1: 80% of public meeting notices are sent at least five (5) days prior to the meeting.	Of the public meetings with minutes available, all were documented as properly noticed. 82% of all public meetings were properly noticed, with the remaining meetings not confirmed as properly noticed due to minutes not being available online.	
	3.2.2: 80% of public meeting information is made available at least five (5) days prior to the meeting.	Of the public meetings with minutes available, all were documented as properly noticed. 82% of all public meetings were properly noticed, with the remaining meetings not confirmed as properly noticed due to minutes not being available online.	
<b>3.3: Provide follow-up information to individuals or groups.</b>	3.3.1: For corridor/site specific projects, the Public Involvement Summary will include a narrative describing how public comment shaped the selected alternative/decision.	The Innovation Trail Study Community Outreach Plan described how public comment influenced the alternatives assessment. The SR 471 Complete Streets Project is still ongoing.	
	3.3.2: LSMPO staff will provide written responses to questions or comments from public meetings within 7 working days.	LSMPO staff do not provide written responses to questions or comments.	
<b>3.4: Promote public participation opportunities at key decision-making points.</b>	3.4.1: Visualization tools and easy to understand graphics will be used to illustrate plans and concepts.	Plans use a variety of text, tables, maps, and images.	
	3.4.2: LSMPO staff will be available at public meetings for transportation projects led by	LSMPO staff attended all public meetings for transportation projects, which included the Innovation Trail Study Project Visioning Team	






Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
	LSMPO, and as requested for Lake and Sumter County, to provide project related information.	Meeting #2 on July 23, 2020, the Innovation Trail Study Public Information Meeting on August 20, 2020, and the SR 471 Complete Streets Workshop on June 9, 2021.	
	3.4.3: 100% of public meeting comments are logged, summarized, analyzed and distributed to applicable staff, Board and committees.	Any time there was a public comment at a meeting, public comments were concisely summarized in the meeting minutes and posted to the website.	
<b>3.5: Incorporate public feedback into transportation decision making.</b>	3.5.1: A record of public comments and how they were integrated into the transportation planning process is maintained by LSMPO staff.	Any time there was a public comment at a meeting, public comments were concisely summarized in the meeting minutes and posted to the website.	
	3.5.2: LSMPO staff will conduct project-specific surveys to evaluate public needs and obtain input into the project recommendations.	A Mentimeter survey was conducted at the first Project Visioning Team Meeting for the Innovation Trail Study and a survey was done for the SR 471 Complete Streets Study on Survey Monkey.	

## 2.4. Objective 4: Outreach Tools and Techniques

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

TABLE 4. *Objective 4 Performance Measures and Evaluation*

Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
<b>4.1: Utilize various public involvement techniques including virtual meetings.</b>	4.1.1: At least three (3) separate techniques are used to involve/engage the public in decision making (e.g., ads, website, meetings).	LSMPO primarily engages the public through committee meetings, which are open to the public, allow virtual participation, have agendas posted to the website ahead of time, and include an agenda item for public comment. LSMPO also uses its website, mailing list, and Facebook to inform and engage the public, as well as public meetings for specific projects or plans.	
	4.1.2: All LSMPO announcements and meeting materials are posted to the LSMPO website at least five (5) days prior to meetings and events.	Of the public meetings with minutes available, all were documented as properly noticed. 82% of all public meetings were properly noticed, with the remaining meetings not confirmed as properly noticed due to minutes not being available online.	
	4.1.3: The LSMPO participates in at least two (2) community events per year.	The MPO did not participate in any community events due to COVID-19.	
<b>4.2: Enable public information accessibility in languages other than English, as appropriate, or in other means to address disabilities.</b>	4.2.1: When requested, and with seventy-two (72) hour notice, the LSMPO will provide meeting notices in other languages.	No materials were requested.	
	4.2.2: When requested, and with seventy-two (72) hour notice, the LSMPO will provide meeting notices in a format to accommodate visual disabilities.	The LSMPO met the only request by helping a visually impaired member access the Lake County TDCB meetings.	
	4.2.3: In specific geographic areas for specific community meetings, 100% of presentation materials are produced in a language other than English (as needed).	Not applicable.	
	4.2.4: LSMPO staff utilize maps and other visual techniques to convey information.	LSMPO has a webpage dedicated to maps and GIS data, including both interactive and static maps, to convey information related to the TIP, LOPP, traffic counts, crash data, boundaries, and	

Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
		more. Not all maps have been recently updated. Planning documents also include maps.	
4.3: Employ various website tools to provide information and gather input.	4.3.1: At least three (3) separate website tools are used to involve/engage the public in decision making, for example, online surveys, online comment form, interactive calendar, online idea submissions and discussions, electronic documents available, etc.	LSMPO uses the following website tools to involve the public in decision-making: online comment form, interactive calendar, meeting details and agendas posted to the website, interactive maps, and planning documents available electronically.	
	4.3.2: LSMPO will use social media to provide information, capture input, and provide responses to public comment.	LSMPO has a Facebook account and posted 12 times between July 2020 - June 2021. Posts include information about meetings, public comment periods, planning documents, the new office location, and safety information.	
4.4: Utilize the website to track public interest in activities.	4.4.1: 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.	The website does not currently use Google Translate or any other translation tools/apps.	
	4.4.2: Project specific web pages are developed and tracked as a method to gather public feedback.	A project website was developed for the <a href="#">East and West Main Street Complete Streets Planning Study</a> . Project web pages were not developed for the Innovation Trail Study or SR 471 Complete Streets Study. However, announcements of the public meetings were posted to the LSMPO's online calendar.	
4.5: MPO will maintain a reasonably current and up-to-date database of contacts.	4.5.1: 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: local government staff, transportation agencies (port, airports, transit, etc), local media, homeowners' associations, civic groups, and special interest groups.	LSMPO maintains an updated email listserv with approximately 72 email recipients.	
	Additional interested parties, including the following, 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;		










Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
	private freight shippers; representatives for 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.		

## 2.5. Objective 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).

TABLE 5. *Objective 5 Performance Measures and Evaluation*

Strategy	Measures	Public Involvement Efforts	Evaluation
<b>5.1: Request the Lake County Section 5307 Program of Projects (POP).</b>	5.1.1: Request annually (by June 1) Lake County Section 5307 POP for the following fiscal year.	A Public Hearing was held for the TIP, which includes the POP for Section 5307 Funds, on May 21, 2021.	
	5.1.2: Request annually (by August 15) a copy of the Section 5307 POP advertisement in the local newspaper.	An advertisement was posted on the website but not in the newspaper.	
<b>5.2: Include POP with the LSMPO LOPP and present at the CAC, TAC, and LSMPO Policy Board meetings in September. The public will have the opportunity to provide input on the POP and be involved in the prioritizing of the POP for funding.</b>	5.2.1: Request (by August 15) a representative from Lake County Public Transit attend the September CAC, TAC, and LSMPO Policy Board meetings when the LOPP and POP are discussed.	Lake County Public Transit is represented on the committees.	
	5.2.2: 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.	Lake County Public Transit is represented on the committees.	
<b>5.3: Increase input opportunities for the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB) on LSMPO programs and plans.</b>	5.3.1: Review the Lake County Section 5307 POP and LOPP with the TDCB.	5307 POP and LOPP were not included on any agendas in FY 2021.	
	5.3.2: Present information on other transit-related projects underway to the TDCB during the quarterly meetings and obtain feedback.	The 2045 LRTP was a Discussion Item at the TDCB meetings on 8/24/2020 and 11/9/2020.	
	5.3.3: 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.	There were no grievances filed in FY 2021.	

### 3. CORE PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The LSMPO is required by federal regulations to develop the following core transportation planning documents:

1. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
3. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
4. List of Priority Projects (LOPP)
5. Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Public involvement is central to the planning process for each of these documents. In addition to holding the required public comment periods and public hearings, the LSMPO submits draft documents to the advisory committees prior to Board approval. All committee and Board meetings include an agenda item for public comment.

The figures below outline the outreach steps completed for the LSMPO's core transportation planning documents during FY 2021 (more details are provided in Appendix B). The full plans are available on the LSMPO website: [lakesumtermpo.com/planning-documents/](https://lakesumtermpo.com/planning-documents/)

#### 3.1. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The LRTP provides long term guidance on transportation improvements over the next 25 years. The current LRTP (2045 LRTP) was adopted in December 2020. The process of developing and adopting an LRTP involves significant public involvement, including federally required outreach activities such as a 21-day public comment period and a public hearing. The LRTP met both of these requirements, as shown in Figure 1 below. The 2045 LRTP also has an independent Public Participation Plan (PPP) to guide and document public participation.

FIGURE 1. *LRTP Public Participation Milestones*



### 3.2. Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

The TIP is a five-year plan that allocates funding to specific transportation projects that are happening in the near future. The MPO met the requirements of holding a 21- day public comment period and a public meeting prior to TIP adoption by the Board. The LSMPO also conducts public outreach for TIP amendments by publishing the draft amendment on the website at least seven days before committee review.

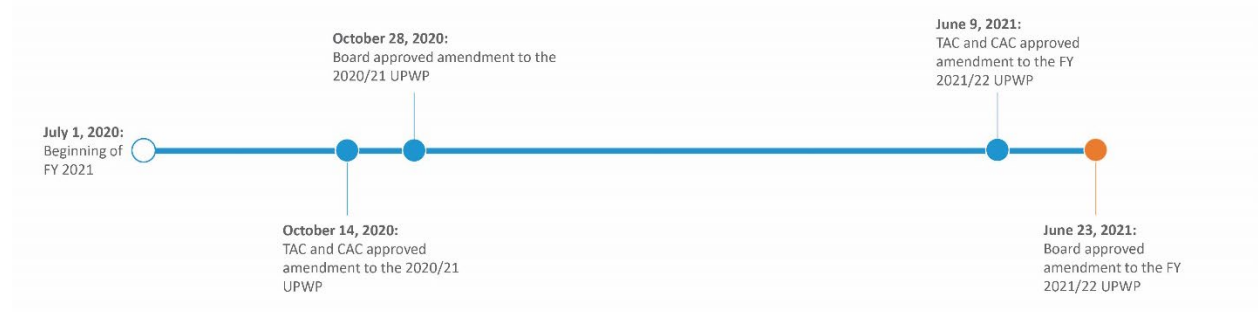
FIGURE 2. *TIP Public Participation Milestones*



### 3.3. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP describes the transportation planning activities and associated budget for the Lake~Sumter MPO over a two-year period. The UPWP is reviewed and revised annually and requires a 21-day public comment period prior to Board adoption. UPWP draft amendments must be submitted to the advisory committees prior to Board adoption. LSMPO presented the UPWP draft amendments to the TAC and CAC before amendments in 2020 and 2021, as shown below in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3. *UPWP Public Participation Milestones*



### 3.4. List of Priority Projects (LOPP)

The LOPP is an annually-reviewed document that prioritizes projects adopted in the LRTP. Similar to the other planning documents, the draft LOPP must be available to the public for a 21-day review period before Board adoption, a requirement the MPO met for the 2021 LOPP. The draft LOPP, as well as any LOPP amendments, are presented to the advisory committees for their input and recommendations for the Board.

FIGURE 4. *LOPP Public Participation Milestones*



### 3.5. Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The PPP identifies the LSMPO's public involvement strategies and outreach activities. Federal law requires a 45-day public comment period prior to Board adoption of the PPP or PPP amendments. The current PPP was adopted in April 2018. The MPO updated the PPP in 2020 and met the requirement for the public comment period.

FIGURE 5. *PPP Public Participation Milestones*



## 4. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLANS

Certain populations have historically been underrepresented in the planning process, particularly minority and low-income communities. Other populations may require certain accommodations to ensure meaningful participation, such as individuals with disabilities or those who have limited English-speaking abilities. Federal Environmental Justice and Title VI policies require that MPOs ensure that all people are able to participate in the transportation planning process regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, income, or educational level.

While the PPP incorporates policies to address these populations, the MPO also has additional public involvement plans that provide policies and strategies to involve specific underserved communities in the transportation planning process:

1. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Plan
2. Title VI Plan
3. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan

The sections below describe each of these plans, outline their policies, and review the related actions undertaken by the MPO in FY 2021. The full plans are available on the LSMPO website: [lakesumtermpo.com/planning-documents/public-participation-plan/](https://lakesumtermpo.com/planning-documents/public-participation-plan/).

### 4.1. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Review

The U.S. Department of Transportation established the DBE Program to address ongoing discrimination and the continued impact of historical discrimination in transportation contracting. The goal of the DBE program is to level the playing field by ensuring small businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals have a fair chance to compete for federally funded transportation contracts.

The LSMPO has a DBE Plan that was adopted in April 2018 and amended in August 2020. The DBE policy states that the LSMPO and its consultants shall take all necessary and reasonable steps to ensure that disadvantaged businesses have an opportunity to compete for and perform the contract work of the LSMPO in a non-discriminatory environment. To carry out the DBE program, the LSMPO designated Michael Woods, Executive Director, as the DBE Liaison Officer and developed the following affirmative action methods:

1. Provide notice to certified DBE subcontractors in the geographical area where the work is to be subcontracted by the Lake~Sumter MPO;
2. Advertise in minority focused media concerning subcontract opportunities with the Lake~Sumter MPO;
3. Provide adequate information about the plans, specifications, and requirements of the contract, not rejecting subcontractors without sound reasons based on a thorough investigation of their capabilities;
4. Hold pre-bid meetings to apprise disadvantaged subcontractors of opportunities with the MPO; and
5. Follow up on initial solicitations of interest to DBE subcontractors to determine with certainty whether the DBE company is interested in the subcontract opportunity.



Per the DBE policy, LSMPO has adopted FDOT's DBE Goal of 10.65% for all federally funded projects that are received from FDOT. LSMPO prepares semi-annual DBE reports to monitor progress towards these goals. In FY 2021, DBE usage was 0%, as the LSMPO utilizes General Planning Contracts (GPCs).

## 4.2. Title VI Review

The LSMPO assures that no person shall on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, family or religious status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination or retaliation under any program or activity, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992. The LSMPO's Title VI Plan was adopted in April 2018 and amended in August 2020. Michael Woods, Executive Director, is the Title VI Specialist and is responsible for management of the Title VI Program.

The table below describes Title VI strategies outlined in the Title VI Plan and actions the LSMPO took in the past year to enact these strategies.

TABLE 6. *Title VI Strategies and Actions*

Strategy	Action
Public meetings should be held in locations that are accessible by public transit. Also, facilities should be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a targeted population is in a certain geographic area, then the meeting location should be in that area for their convenience.	The majority of public meetings were virtual due to COVID-19. For the meetings that were a hybrid format, the MPO office is located along a transit line.
To facilitate involvement of traditionally underserved populations, community leaders, and organizations that represent these groups should be consulted about how to most effectively reach their members. Relationships with these groups should be maintained for future partnerships in the planning process	The TDCB members include representatives from a variety of underrepresented groups, including representatives for the elderly, disabled, children at risk, economically disadvantaged, and users of the TD system.
In addition to mainstream media organizations, website postings, and news releases announcing public participation opportunities should be targeted to media that reaches minority and ethnic populations.	Public participation opportunities are not currently targeted to media that specifically reaches minority and ethnic populations.
With at least 72-hours advanced notice of the scheduled meeting, deaf (sign language) interpreters, translators, and Braille documents can be provided for public meetings. Notifications of opportunities for public involvement will include contact information for people needing these or other special accommodations.	Public notices include the following language: Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the MPO at 352-315-0170 at least seven days prior to the scheduled meeting.
At public meetings, MPO staff should attempt to communicate as effectively as possible. Technical jargon should be avoided and appropriate dress and conduct are important. For some meetings, it may be best to use trained facilitators or language translators to better communicate with the audience.	MPO staff continually strives to use clear, effective communication and avoid technical jargon when communicating with the public. Language translators are available at meetings when requested.

### 4.3. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Review

The LSMPO has an LEP plan that was adopted in April 2018 and amended in 2020. The LSMPO's LEP policy ensures that persons with Limited English Proficiency are neither discriminated against nor denied meaningful access to participation in the organization's programs and services. LEP is defined as individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

In accordance with federal regulations, the LSMPO performed a Four Factor Analysis to understand what reasonable steps should be taken to ensure meaningful access to LEP individuals. The analysis centers around four factors—demographics, frequency of contact, importance of program, and resources. The results of the analysis revealed that 3.7% of individuals (over 5 years old) in the LSMPO's planning area speak English less than very well, with the majority of those individuals speaking Spanish. To date, there have been no requests for language assistance services to the LSMPO. Given the size of the LEP population and financial restraints, the MPO does not translate all documents. However, the LSMPO does offer verbal or written translation if requested within a reasonable amount of time and within available resources.

The table below describes the strategies in the LEP Policy and the actions the MPO have taken in the past year associated with these strategies. Additional techniques are outlined in the LEP Plan.

TABLE 7. *LEP Strategies and Actions*





Strategy	Action
A mechanism to provide ongoing assessment of needs, programs, and activities of target audiences, along with the organization's capacity to meet these needs using the Limited English Proficiency Plan.	The LEP Plan was amended on August 26, 2020.
Translation of vital written materials in languages other than English where there is a significant number or percentage of persons with limited English proficiency.	Based on the Four Factor Analysis in the LEP Plan, full translation of plan documents is not considered warranted or cost feasible at this time. The LSMPO provides verbal and written translation if requested within a reasonable time and if within the available resources. There were no requests for translation in FY 2021.
Oral language assistance to Limited English Proficiency persons for programs, where such assistance is requested and/or anticipated.	There were no requests for oral language assistance in FY 2021.
Identified procedures and a designated representative from Lake~Sumter MPO responsible for implementing activities related to the Limited English Proficiency Plan.	The LEP Plan identifies LEP procedures and designates Michael Woods as the representative responsible for oversight and implementation of the LEP Plan.
Notification of the availability of free language services to those persons in the target audience, through oral and written notice in the relevant primary language assistance activities.	Public notices include the following language: Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the MPO at 352-315-0170 at least seven days prior to the scheduled meeting.
Staff training on policies and procedures of the organization's language assistance activities.	There is not currently any staff training on policies and procedures of the organization's LEP activities. Michael Woods, the Executive Director, is also the LEP Liaison.

## 5. FINDINGS

Overall, the LSMPO is meeting the majority of performance measures but there are several areas where public involvement strategies can be improved. These findings are outlined below:

1. The MPO is meeting most performance measures in the PPP, as shown below in Table 8. LSMPO has also exceeded standards in several instances, specifically related to utilizing various tools and techniques and scheduling meetings at convenient times and locations. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the MPO was able to not only maintain public involvement efforts, but also offer new opportunities to participate virtually. Utilizing different techniques and providing multiple avenues for public involvement allows the MPO to reach more people and reduce barriers to participation.
2. When performance measures are not being met, it is primarily due to a discrepancy between the strategy outlined in the PPP and the process being used by the MPO. For example, Measure 3.1.2. states that “75% of all responses to media inquiries are made within one (1) working day of receipt date.” However, the MPO’s current practice is to respond to email or website inquiries within two days. In other instances, existing MPO practice does not call for tracking data that is necessary to assess the effectiveness of the public outreach strategy.
3. Some strategies are implemented in MPO processes but are not consistently utilized. For example, Measure 4.4.2., which states that “project specific web pages are developed and tracked as a method to gather public feedback”, was implemented for the East and West Main Street Complete Streets Planning Study but not the other two planning studies. Similarly, Measure 5.1.2. says that the MPO should “request annually (by August 15) a copy of the Section 5307 POP advertisement in the local newspaper.” While the Section 5307 POP was advertised in the newspaper in previous years, it only advertised online in FY 2021.
4. The MPO is following the required public involvement processes for their core planning documents, as described in the PPP.
5. LSMPO is utilizing DBE, LEP, and Title VI policies outline in their respective plans, though the policies have limited applicability due to the organizational structure of LSMPO and needs of the planning area. In particular, while the MPO had adopted the FDOT DBE goal, DBE usage is currently 0% due to the use of General Planning Contracts.

TABLE 8. *PPP Evaluation Results*

6%	65%	17%	6%	6%
				N/A
Exceeded Measure	Met Measure	Needs Improvement	Data Not Tracked	Not Applicable

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations represent steps the MPO can take to enhance public involvement and better measure public participation efforts moving forward:

1. **Align MPO practices and performance measures.** Review strategies and performance measures that need improvement. Examine where MPO processes need to be updated to align with strategies and performance measures laid out in the PPP. Additionally, LSMPO should consider where performance measures should be updated to align with current practices where appropriate.
2. **Assess the MPO's ability to track data for measures where data is not currently being tracked.** The MPO should consider available staff capacity and resources. If not, consider adjusting the performance measure to align with organizational capacity.
3. **Develop operational processes to improve consistency of public outreach practices.** Practices may include using existing resources, such as the PPP Outreach Log, or creating new resources, such as a comprehensive public participation checklist for staff and consultants.

## Appendix A: MEETINGS AND OUTREACH EVENTS

#	Name of Event/Meeting	Type	Date	Time	Location
1	Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA) Meeting	CFMPOA Meeting	7/10/2020	10:00 AM	Virtual
2	Innovation Trail Study Project Visioning Team Meeting #2	Public Workshop	7/23/2020	9:00 AM	Virtual
3	Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	8/12/2020	1:30 PM	Virtual
4	Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	8/12/2020	3:00 PM	Virtual
5	Innovation Trail Study Public Information Meeting	Public Workshop	8/20/2020	5:30 PM	The Mount Dora Community Building 520 North Baker Street Mount Dora, FL 32757
6	Lake County TDCB Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	8/24/2020	10:00 AM	Virtual
7	Sumter County TDCB Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	8/24/2020	2:00 PM	Virtual
8	Governing Board (MPO) Meeting	Governing Board Meeting	8/26/2020	2:00 PM	Virtual
9	Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA) Meeting	CFMPOA Meeting	10/9/2020	10:00 AM	Virtual
10	Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	10/14/2020	1:30 PM	Virtual
11	Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	10/14/2020	3:00 PM	Virtual
12	Executive Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	10/28/2020	1:00 PM	Virtual
13	Governing Board (MPO) Meeting	Governing Board Meeting	10/28/2020	2:00 PM	Virtual
14	Lake County TDCB Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	11/9/2020	10:00 AM	Virtual
15	Sumter County TDCB Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	11/9/2020	2:00 PM	Virtual

#	Name of Event/Meeting	Type	Date	Time	Location
16	2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Public Workshop	Public Workshop	11/16/2020	4:00 PM	Virtual
17	2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Public Workshop	Public Workshop	11/16/2020	6:00 PM	Virtual
18	Priority Projects Workshop	Workshop	11/20/2020	10:00 AM	Virtual
19	Governing Board (MPO) Meeting	Committee Meeting	12/9/2020	2:00 PM	Virtual
20	FDOT Public Hearing for the Tentative Five Year Work Program	Public Hearing	1/11-15/2021	24 hours a day	Virtual
21	Lake County TDCB Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	2/8/2021	10:00 AM	Virtual
22	Sumter County TDCB Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	2/8/2021	2:00 PM	Virtual
23	Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	2/10/2021	1:30 PM	Virtual
24	Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	2/10/2021	3:00 PM	Virtual
25	Executive Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	2/24/2021	1:00 PM	Virtual
26	Governing Board (MPO) Meeting	Governing Board Meeting	2/24/2021	2:00 PM	Virtual
27	Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA) Meeting	CFMPOA Meeting	4/9/2021	10:00 AM	Virtual
28	Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	4/14/2021	1:30 PM	Virtual
29	Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	4/14/2021	3:00 PM	Virtual
30	Governing Board (MPO) Meeting	Governing Board Meeting	4/28/2021	2:00 PM	Virtual
31	Lake County TDCB Annual Public Hearing	Public Hearing	6/7/2021	10:00 AM	Virtual/MPO Office
32	Lake County TDCB Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	6/7/2021	10:00 AM	Virtual/MPO Office



#	Name of Event/Meeting	Type	Date	Time	Location
33	Sumter County TDCB Annual Public Hearing	Public Hearing	6/7/2021	2:00 PM	Virtual/MPO Office
34	Sumter County TDCB Committee Meeting	Committee Meeting	6/7/2021	2:00 PM	Virtual/MPO Office
35	Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	6/9/2021	1:30 PM	Virtual/MPO Office
36	Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting	Committee Meeting	6/9/2021	3:00 PM	Virtual/MPO Office
37	Community Workshop for the SR 471 Complete Streets Study / Online Survey Launch	Public Workshop	6/9/2021	6:00 PM	City of Webster City Hall 85 E Central Avenue Webster, FL 33597
38	Stakeholder Meeting with Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway group	Stakeholder Meeting	6/15/2021	11:00 AM	Virtual
39	Governing Board (MPO) Meeting	Governing Board Meeting	6/23/2021	2:00 PM	Virtual

## Appendix B: PLANNING DOCUMENTS OUTREACH STEPS

TABLE 9. *Outreach Steps for Federally Required Planning Documents*

Outreach Steps Completed	Date
<b>Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)</b>	
TAC and CAC received overview of the 2045 LRTP Needs Assessment and Preliminary Cost Feasible Plan	8/12/2020
Board received overview of the 2045 LRTP Needs Assessment and Preliminary Cost Feasible Plan	8/26/2020
Draft LRTP posted on website and comments requested by November 18, with four different options to provide comments	10/8/2020
TAC and CAC approved the 2045 LRTP Summary/Adoption Report	10/14/2020
Board approved the 2045 LRTP Summary/Adoption Report to include opening the public comment period Oct.-Dec.	10/28/2020
LRTP Environmental Justice Workshops presented to TDCBs	11/9/2020
LRTP Survey made available on website for public comments	11/13/2020
LSMPO hosted two virtual LRTP Public Workshops (posted notice on website on 11/13/2020)	11/16/2020
Board closed public comment period and adopted the 2045 LRTP	12/9/2020
LRTP finalized	3/8/2021
<b>LRTP Non-Substantial Amendments</b>	
N/A	
<b>LRTP Substantial Amendments</b>	
N/A	
<b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b>	
Opening of the Public Hearing and Public Review Period for the FY 2021/22-2025/26 TIP. Draft TIP was added to website with options to also receive TIP by fax or email. Draft hard copy documents were also made available at the MPO office. Public was offered options to ask questions via postal service, phone, or email.	5/21/2021
TAC and CAC approved the FY 2021/22-2025/26 TIP	6/9/2021
Board approved the FY 2021/22-2025/26 TIP	6/23/2021
<b>TIP Amendments</b>	

TAC and CAC approved FY 2020/21-2024/25 TIP Annual Roll Forward Amendment	8/12/2020
Board approved FY 2020/21-2024/25 TIP Annual Roll Forward Amendment	8/26/2020
Board approved amendment to the FY 2020/21-2024/25 TIP	2/24/2021
Board approved amendment to the FY 2020/21-2024/25 TIP	4/28/2021
<b>Emergency TIP Amendments</b>	
N/A	
<b>Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)</b>	
TAC and CAC approved amendment to the 2020/21 UPWP	10/14/2020
Board approved amendment to the 2020/21 UPWP	10/28/2020
TAC and CAC approved amendment to the FY 2021/22 UPWP	6/9/2021
Board approved amendment to the FY 2021/22 UPWP	6/23/2021
<b>List of Priority Projects (LOPP)</b>	
TAC and CAC received overview of the 2020 LOPP Final Report	8/12/2020
TAC and CAC received overview of the 2021 LOPP	10/14/2020
Board received overview of the 2021 LOPP	10/28/2020
Virtual Priority Projects Workshop (posted notice on website on 11/13/2020)	11/20/2020
Board received overview of the 2021 LOPP	12/9/2020
TAC and CAC received overview of the 2021 LOPP	2/10/2021
Board received overview of the 2021 LOPP	2/24/2021
TAC and CAC approved the Draft 2021 LOPP for Board Consideration	4/14/2021
Board approved the Draft 2021 LOPP	4/28/2021
Public Review for the 2021 LOPP	6/2/2021
TAC and CAC approved the 2021 LOPP	6/9/2021
Board approved the 2021 LOPP	6/23/2021
<b>Public Participation Plan</b>	
TAC and CAC provided comments on the revised PPP	8/12/2020
Update to PPP approved by Board	8/26/2020