

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



11/1/2013

Hattiesburg-Petal- Forrest-Lamar
Metropolitan Planning Organization

NOTATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

THE PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN FINANCED IN PART THROUGH GRANTS FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, AND THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION AND THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Public Participation Plan

HATTIESBURG-PETAL-FORREST-LAMAR MPO

MISSION STATEMENT:

The HPFL- MPO's mission is to invite cooperating agencies, develop consensus among a wide range of stakeholders with diverse interests, resolve conflict, and ensure that quality transportation decisions are fully explained. These responsibilities will force the transportation projects that are implemented to balance transportation needs, costs, environmental resources, safety, and public input in order to arrive at objective and responsible transportation decisions.

SECTION I

A. Introduction and Purpose

The Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization's (HPFL-MPO) transportation planning decisions affect the lives of people living and traveling through the Hattiesburg Urbanized Area (HUZA). A Public Participation Process will provide an opportunity for people to directly engage in the transportation decision-making process and influence transportation choices in the region. This process will promote diverse input in the transportation planning process as well give the public a sense of ownership of developed transportation solutions.

The participation process must be a proactive process in which governing bodies strive to find innovative ways to identify and engage the affected public, provide a wide variety of opportunities for agencies to become involved, and create a meaningful process that is transparent and ensures effective communication about how public contribution influences transportation decisions. It is also important that a public participation process be continuously evaluated and improved to ensure that under-represented communities are given a voice.

The major component of this document is to provide the HPFL-MPO with information that includes:

- the identification of the locations of socio-economic groups, including low-income and minority populations as covered by the Executive Order on Environmental Justice and Title VI provisions
- the planning process with methods to secure full and fair participation of low-income and minority populations
- a continuing public education process which focuses on the 3-C transportation planning process of continuing, comprehensive, coordinated planning.
- useful demographic information, which will be used to examine the distribution of the benefits and burdens of the transportation investments across these groups included in the plan and TIP to address these needs.

This includes but is not limited to lower income households, minorities, persons with disabilities, representatives from community services organizations, tribal councils and other public agencies. This element also assists in identifying and addressing environmental justice and social equity issues.

B. Background of the Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization

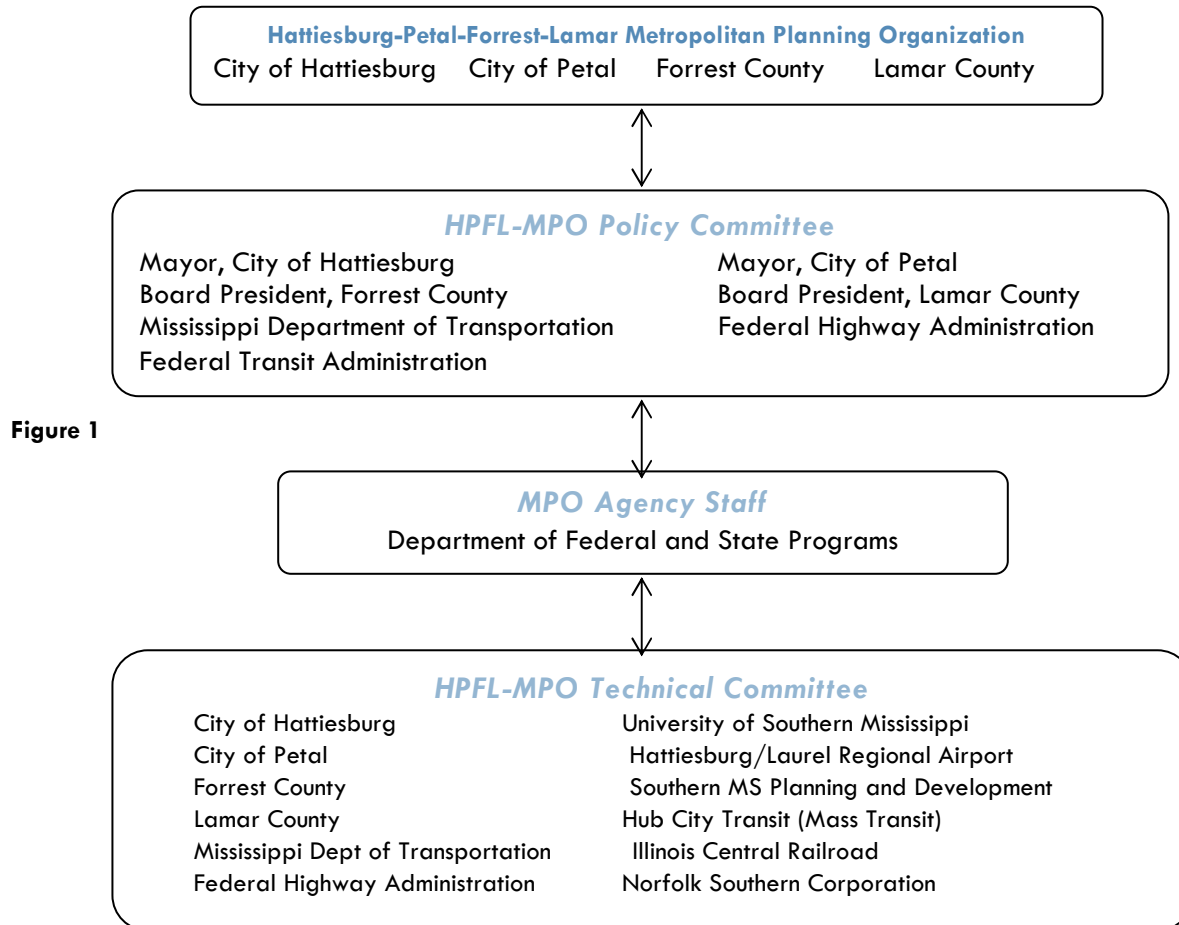
Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are regional transportation planning agencies, which provide a forum for cooperative decision-making concerning area-wide transportation issues. The MPO was created by Federal and State law to develop transportation plans and programs which encourage and promote the implementation of transportation systems which embrace the various modes of transportation in a manner that will maximize the mobility of people and goods. The Federal legislation focuses on planning for urban areas, rather than individual cities. Every urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 persons must have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation to qualify for federal highway or transit assistance. All transportation projects should be supported and coordinated with the MPO's long range plans to be eligible for Federal funds.

Mississippi Governor William Winter established the Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization in August 1982. The HPFL-MPO was established when the Hattiesburg central area reached a population status of 50,000 plus. The HPFL-MPO area consists of the City of Hattiesburg, the City of Petal, a portion of Forrest County and a portion of Lamar County. **(Appendix A - Urbanized Area Map)**

The smallest of MPO's in the State of Mississippi, representatives from the City of Hattiesburg, City of Petal, Forrest County and Lamar County, the Mississippi Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration are involved in the transportation planning process for the MPO. Their purpose is to provide effective leadership in the development of transportation plans and programs.

The HPFL-MPO functions include, but are not limited to, the preparation of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), Public Participation Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and special studies. The MPO is responsible for ensuring all modes of transportation and transportation related projects are included in the planning process.

The Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar MPO is the primary committee responsible for developing policies and procedures to guide transportation planning process for the Hattiesburg Urbanized Area. The board consists of the Mayors of the City of Hattiesburg and Petal, Presidents of the Forrest County and Lamar County Board of Supervisors, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Transportation and the Executive Director of the MPO and the Federal Highway Administration (non-voting member). The MPO Staff and the Technical Committee assist HPFL-MPO Policy Committee with planning and recommendations.



The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports the planning efforts of the HPFL-MPO, which is vital because of the diverse array of projects that can be funded in the HUZA.

The official purpose of the MPO is to develop and coordinate the transportation planning process in the urbanized area. Citizens participation objects include involvement of interested citizens, stakeholders and representatives of community organizations in agency work through timely workshops on transportation issues, fully noticed public hearings and ongoing citizen involvement in the planning and decision processes.

Citizen and community participation is crucial to the success of program plans and projects of the HPFL-MPO. Ideas for public participation include:

- Early and continued opportunities for public involvement.
- Timely dissemination of information about transportation plans and programs.
- Reasonable public access to technical and policy information.

- Adequate notice to the public regarding public involvement opportunities and activities early in the planning process.
- Documentation of public comments in MPO plans and programs and provides reports that are clear, timely and broadly distributed.
- Periodic review and revision of the public participation process.
- Promote dialogue and partnership among the community, the business community, organizations, other interested citizens and public officials.

SECTION II MAP-21

C. Federal Requirements/MAP-21 Compliance Planning Factors

The most current transportation legislation, “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century” (MAP-21), was signed by President Barack Obama on July 6th, 2012 and became effective on October 1st, 2012. The new legislation upheld public involvement strategies required by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). MAP-21 requires the MPOs to provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will serve to advance eight (8) transportation planning factors identified under MAP-21 as follows [per Section 1201 (h)]:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Under MAP-21, the HPFL-MPO is encouraged to consult with agencies responsible for other planning activities that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) via Section 1201 (g)(3) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other

related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area.

As part of the development of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan update, MAP-21 requires that types of mitigation shall be discussed within the 20-year planning document along with potential sites to carry out the activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan. The discussion of potential environmental mitigation shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with Federal, State, and tribal wildlife, land management and regulatory agencies per Section 1201(i)(2)(D)(ii) of MAP-21.

The MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation concerning the development of a metropolitan transportation plan. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate: (i) comparison of transportation plans with State conservation plans or maps, if available; or (ii) comparison of metropolitan transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources, if available per Section 1201(i)(5)(B) of MAP-21.

The MPO shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, 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 a reasonable opportunity to comment on the metropolitan transportation plan and TIP and major revisions. [1201(i)(6)(A)]

This MPO's Public Participation Plan shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and shall provide that all interested parties have a reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the metropolitan transportation plan and TIP updates and major revisions. [1201(i)(6) (B)]

The Public Participation Plan is a living document and will be periodically reviewed for possible revisions.

The HPFL-MPO will continually strive to consult with agencies that are involved in the transportation planning process in the MPO area. With the unique situation of the HPFL-MPO being the smallest MPO in the state, housed in the Hattiesburg Intermodal Facility of the City of Hattiesburg, the HPFL-MPO functions in the Department of Federal and State Programs, consultation between local planning agencies and city-wide departments which consist of planning, land management/zoning, site planning, flood plain mitigation, historic preservation, Engineering and Traffic Engineering as well as accessibility to other departments of city, county and regional government (i.e. Emergency Management) will be on an ongoing basis.

The HPFL-MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP. When the HUZA includes Federal public lands, the HPFL-MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan.

SECTION III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The HPFL- MPO recognizes that an effective participation process is a vital element in the development and implementation of transportation plans and programs. The process includes the entire community in developing feasible alternatives and encourages community leaders to support the transportation system. The process also increases public awareness of transportation services and programs.

D. MPO Objectives and General Guidelines

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by the MPO for public involvement. In its public participation process, the HPFL-MPO will:

1. Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdiction concerns).
2. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plans, the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are being considered.
- 3 . Give adequate public notice of public participation activities and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of the Metropolitan Transportation Plans, the state, local, transit TIP and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues, which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan shall be made available.
4. Respond in writing, when applicable, to public input. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans for the TIP and Metropolitan Transportation Plan developed in cooperation with the Mississippi Department of Transportation as a result of the public participation process, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final MTP and TIP.
5. Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to the transportation disadvantaged, minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, and low-income households who may face challenges accessing employment and other services. MAP-21 requires that the MPO shall provide reasonable opportunities for affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, 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 a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation planning process via Section 1201(i)(6)(A).

6. Provide a minimum public comment period of 30 calendar days prior to the adoption of the PPP and/or any amendments. Notice of the comment period will be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation and various other publications prior to the commencement of the 30-day comment period. Notice will also be mailed to the entire HPFL-MPO mailing list prior to the start of the 30-day comment period.
7. Provide a public comment period of not less than 30 calendar days prior to adoption of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the TIP, the UPWP, Transit Development Plans, any formal amendments or updates, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects.
8. Coordinate the PPP with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduces redundancies and costs.
9. To ensure the MPO provides coordination for the City of Hattiesburg Hub City Transit (HCT) and recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 (FTA funds), the City's system, Hub City Transit, (HCT) relies on the MPO Public Participation Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, and the Transportation Improvement Plan processes to ensure public awareness and involvement for the HCT Program of Projects (POP). The Program of Projects listing shall be included within the MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

E. Public Participation Goals and Objectives

The HPFL-MPO shall actively engage the public in the transportation planning process and employ visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques include: charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, use of GIS systems and/or computer simulation.

When feasible, the HPFL-MPO shall electronically mail meeting announcements to the MPO contact list or to targeted groups for upcoming activities. The HPFL-MPO shall maintain an up-to-date database of contacts including at a minimum the following persons to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products. (**See Appendix B**)

The HPFL-MPO shall keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continues basis by making all publications and work products available electronically to the public via the MPO's web home page (via internet) and at the MPO office by furnishing CDs and displaying maps, as a visualization technique, to describe transportation actions as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The HPFL-MPO staff shall be available to provide general and project-specific information at a central location during normal business hours and after hours at the request of community interest groups with reasonable notice.

The HPFL-MPO shall produce a quarterly newsletter for distribution by mail and via email to the HPFL-MPO contact list, available at public libraries and city halls, and available at the HPFL-MPO website www.cityofhattiesburgms.com. The newsletter includes, at a minimum, updates on current or recently completed projects, announcements of upcoming meetings, and contact information. The HPFL-MPO shall maintain an internet website that will be compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled users. The website shall be updated and maintained to provide the most current and accurate transportation planning information available. The website shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:

- A. *Contact Information*
- B. *Current HPFL-MPO Committee Membership*
- C. *Meeting Calendars and Agendas*
- D. *Work Products and Publications (Transportation Improvement Plan, Metropolitan Transportation Plans, Unified Planning Work Program, etc.)*
- E. *Comment/Question Form*
- F. *Links to Related Agencies*
- G. *Current By-Laws and Operating Procedures (including the Public Participation Plan and Updates)*

The HPFL-MPO shall encourage the involvement of all area citizens in the transportation planning process. The target audiences shall be identified for each planning study conducted by the MPO, including residents, business and property owners and those traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, including but not limited to, low income and minority households, within the study area. The Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan identifies populations within the study area with limited proficiency in reading, speaking, or writing in English (**See Appendix C**). The HPFL-MPO shall, when feasible, hold public meetings at a site convenient to potentially affected citizens.

The HPFL-MPO shall participate in public participation activities for individual transportation improvement projects from the planning phase through construction. The MPO shall actively assist the Mississippi Department of Transportation, local governments and transportation agencies in the development and implementation of public involvement techniques for planning and other studies, including Major Corridor/Feasibility Studies, and Project Development and Environmental Studies or other documents to support planning.

The HPFL-MPO shall strive to continuously improve public participation. The MPO shall continuously evaluate public involvement techniques. This Public Participation Plan shall be reviewed and adopted, with revisions if necessary, at least every three (3) years in order to improve the effectiveness of public involvement.

F. Public Participation Techniques

Public participation is an ongoing activity of the MPO. Public participation is also an integral part of one-time activities such as corridor studies and regularly repeated activities such as the annual Transportation Improvement Program process and Metropolitan Transportation Plan updates.

This section contains descriptions of public participation tools currently being used by the MPO:

MPO WEBSITE

Description: The site was established to provide basic information about the MPO process, members, meeting times and contact information. The site has been expanded recently to include information about specific projects undertaken by the MPO. Work products, such as the Draft, and Adopted, Public Participation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Congestion Management Process, and other studies are available from the site. Through the website, the citizens are able to review the Transportation Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee meeting minutes. Also, citizens are able to submit comments and sign up to be added to the various distribution lists maintained by the MPO. The site provides many links to other transportation related sites at the local and national level. The website address is www.cityofhattiesburgms.com or www.hpflmpo.com. The website is maintained and updated by HPFL-MPO staff and regularly reviewed. Basic statistics are tracked through the website on a monthly basis. Data gathered and logged include the number of visits and the sources of visits to the website.

Activities: The website is used to list current and topical information on regular and special meetings, audio meeting minutes for Technical Committee & Policy Committee, planning studies, publications, related public events and work products.

MPO MASTER DATABASE

Description: HPFL-MPO staff maintains a master database of business, federal, state and local agencies and interested public. The database includes committee membership, mailing information, phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses and web sites. The database is used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists, special interest groups and homeowner association contacts, and is the foundation of the newsletter mailing list. The database will be used to establish and maintain a list of e-mail contacts for electronic meeting notification and announcements.

Activities: The database is used to enhance public involvement activities.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Description: HPFL-MPO staff currently utilizes various social media to further encourage the interaction between the MPO and the public. Facebook and Twitter are used to present the public with information concerning the MPO and other programs, projects, activities, events, etc. YouTube, a video-sharing website is used as an education tool for the public about the MPO and the transportation process. YouTube also presents opportunities for disseminating information to public with low literacy. **(See Social Media Policy, Appendix F)** Designated HPFL-MPO Staff maintain and regularly review all social media

sites. Basic statistics are tracked by social media sites and are reviewed on a monthly basis by staff. Data gathered and logged include the total number of comments, likes and shares, traffic sources, some demographics, etc.

Activities: Public awareness of projects, meetings, workshops, etc. Provides opportunities for public comment and discussion on various MPO and transportation-related topics.\

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Description: The **Mississippi Open Meetings Act** legislate the methods by which public meetings are conducted. Title 25, Chapter 41, Sections 1-17 of the Mississippi Code define the law. Requires posting a written notice of any public meeting where a decision could be made or that may be attended by more than one elected official. The MPO regularly posts notices of the MPO Transportation Policy Committee meetings.

Activities: Regular and other meetings seeking public input are posted.

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Description: MPO staff produces a quarterly newsletter titled "**Transportation News**" that is distributed to citizens, municipalities, media and other agencies. The publication is available to the public in both English and Spanish. Citizens are added to the distribution list by their own request.

Activities: The **Transportation News** newsletter is used to promote regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications, work products, on-going projects and committee member interviews.

DISPLAY ADS

Description: Publication of ads that are used to promote meetings that are not regularly scheduled, such as corridor study workshops. They are published in selected newspapers, both English and Spanish, in order to reach a larger audience than those that typically read legal notices.

Activities: Public awareness of project specific meetings, workshops, or open houses.

OTHER MEDIA

Description: Opportunities are sought for articles in other newsletters produced by municipalities, homeowners' associations, church groups, civic groups, or others that may have an interest in the MPO. Opportunities are also sought to present to civic and social agencies, participate on radio talk shows, and provide television news highlights. The MPO further spreads community awareness of planning activities by disseminating public service announcements (PSA) to local news channels, city cable networks and websites, local movie theaters, and local independent school districts and universities.

ACTIVITIES: Increased opportunities to make public aware of corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

DIRECT MAILINGS

Description: Used to announce upcoming meetings or activities or to provide information to a targeted area or group of people. Direct mailings are usually post cards, but can be letters or flyers. An area may be targeted for a direct mailing because of potential impacts from a project. Groups are targeted that may have an interest in a specific issue, for example avid cyclists and pedestrians may be targeted for pathways and trail projects.

Activities: Project-specific meetings, workshops, open houses, corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

PRESS RELEASES

Description: Formal press releases are sent to local media (newspaper, TV, and radio) to announce upcoming meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by the MPO or their committees.

Activities: Corridor or other planning studies, workshops, open houses, public hearings, and other MPO activities.

PROJECT WORKSHOPS/OPEN-HOUSES

Description: These are targeted public meetings that are generally open, informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. “Walking Workshops” such as the one held to gather input for the Pedestrian Plan can also encourage the public to participate by providing small activities through a selected . Short presentations may be given at these meetings. The purpose of project-specific meetings is to provide project information to the public and to solicit public comment and a sense of public priorities.

Activities: Metropolitan planning studies, prioritization of projects, public input prior to drafting major multimodal plans such as the Pedestrian Plan and other major MPO activities.

E-MAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS/INTERNET MESSAGE BOARDS/ CALENDARS

Description: Meeting announcements and MPO information are e-mailed to interested persons that have submitted their e-mail addresses to MPO staff. Interactive message boards are used to facilitate discussion and solicit public comment regarding specific MPO projects or issues. The dates of Technical Committee, Policy Committee, Bike/Ped, and all public meetings are posted to the MPO Google Calendar as well as other local community calendars and city hall and county calendars.

Activities: Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, regular meetings, public hearings, amendments/updates, workshops, open houses, and other major MPO activities.

MPO LOGO/QR CODES

Description: A logo representing the MPO is used to identify products and publications of the MPO. A logo helps the public become familiar with the different activities of the MPO by providing a means of recognizing MPO products. A Quick Response (QR) code, much like a bar code is used on MPO publications for the public who are more accustomed to viewing information instantly on all smart phone

or tablet devices. The code, once scanned with a code reader app, will direct the public directly to the HPFL-MPO website.

Activities: A logo is used on all MPO publications; including those developed by consultants working on MPO sponsored projects to create a community awareness of the MPO deliverables. The QR code is used on MPO publications directed to the public, including flyers, posters, brochures and pamphlets.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Description: These are public meetings used to solicit public comment on a project or issue being considered for adoption by the MPO. Hearings provide a formal setting for citizens to provide comments to the MPO or another decision-making body. They are recorded and transcribed for the record.

Activities: Metropolitan Transportation Plans, Transportation Improvement Program, corridor studies, Project Development & Environmental studies, and other planning studies as needed for other MPO activities.

COMMENT FORMS

Description: Comments forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues being presented at a workshop or other public meeting. Comment forms can be very general in nature, or can ask for very specific feedback. For example, a comment form may ask for comments on specific alignment alternatives being considered during a corridor study, or may ask for a person's general feelings about any aspect of transportation. Comment forms can also be included in publications and on web sites to solicit input regarding the subject of the publication and/or the format of the publication or website. **(See Appendix G)**

Activities: Public workshops, open houses, hearings and other meetings, general MPO activities.

SURVEYS

Description: Surveys are used when very specific input from the public is desired. A survey can be used in place of comment cards to ask very specific questions such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys are also used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies such as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns or areas of improvement within the multimodal system. The MPO currently utilizes Survey Monkey, a free online survey service with features such as PDF printouts, downloadable data with charts, and the ability to share surveys to the MPO website and social media. The MPO also uses brief one-question surveys through the MPO Website and Facebook page to gather public input on general transportation planning issues.

Activities: Conduct on-line surveys on issues and needs to provide input into the plans, conduct surveys at the transit terminal station or public meetings, and attach surveys or survey links to flyers and ads.

POSTERS AND FLYERS

Description: Posters and flyers are used to announce meetings and events and are distributed to public places such as City Halls, libraries and community centers for display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of a meeting, the time (s) and location (s), and contact information.

Posters and flyers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using direct mailing and/or newsletters.

Activities: Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, regular and special MPO activities.

GROUPING OF PROJECTS

Description: MPO's make use of statewide project groupings in their TIP. MDOT in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration developed statewide programs identified by a statewide project number that provides a more efficient method of identified by a statewide project number that provides a more efficient method of programming and contracting for projects that minimizes the necessity for TIP revisions.

Activities: The MPO recognizes the use of these grouping categories and will use them as appropriate. Individual projects eligible for statewide project groupings may be included in the MPO/TIP for informational purposes only. The information only project lists will be clearly annotated as such and may be included as an appendix.

ANNUAL PROJECT LISTINGS

Description: MPOs publish an annual listing of projects which include investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year shall be published or otherwise made available by the cooperative effort of the State, transit operator, and metropolitan planning organization for public update. The listing shall be consistent with the funding categories identified in each TIP.

Activities: The HPFL-MPO posts the projects on the website for public review as the projects are being let. Plus, it includes the status of the project throughout the duration of the project.

SECTION IV SUMMARY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY TABLE

Program Adoption	Public Meetings	Comment Period (minimum)	Purpose/Remarks
Metropolitan Transportation Plan(MTP) (Long Range Plan Transportation Plan)	Two meetings prior to TPC approval Updated Every 5 years	30 Days	A summary of all oral and written comments will be provided to the TPC and available for public review and placed in MPO minutes.
Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) (Short Range Plan)	Two meetings prior to TPC approval Updated Every 2 years	30 Days	A summary of all oral and written comments will be provided to the TPC and available for public review and placed in MPO minutes.
Unified Planning Work Plan (UPWP)	Presented at MPO Policy and Technical Committee Meeting for public comment.	30 days	Updated Bi-Annually. Comments received are recorded and placed in MPO minutes for public review.
Public Participation Plan	Public Meeting on Draft and MPO Technical and Policy Committee Public Hearing/Meeting	45 days	Updated every 3 years. Comments received are recorded, distributed and placed in MPO minutes for public review.
Annual Project Listing	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	An Update is provided by the MPO on an annual basis and made available for viewing at the MPO website.
Program Amendments			
Long Range Transportation Plan	MPO Policy and Technical Committee Public Hearing/Meeting	15 days	Amendments are applied as needed.
Transportation Improvement Plan	MPO Policy and Technical Committee Public Hearing/Meeting	15 days	Amendments are applied as needed.
Unified Planning Work Program	MPO Policy and Technical Committee Public Hearing/Meeting	15 days	Amendments are applied as needed.
Open Meetings			
Transportation Policy Committee (TPC)	Regular Meetings are held on a quarterly basis.	N/A	
Transportation Technical Committee (TTC)	Regular Meetings are held on a quarterly basis.	N/A	



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:	HATTIESBURG URBANIZED AREA MAP
APPENDIX B:	LIST OF AGENCIES FOR CONSULTATION
APPENDIX C:	LEP PLAN POLICY
APPENDIX D:	SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
APPENDIX E:	PPP EVALUATION GUIDE
APPENDIX F:	COMMENT FORM

Appendix A

HATTIESBURG URBANIZED AREA MAP

Appendix B

LIST OF AGENCIES FOR CONSULTATION

Various provisions of SAFETEA-LU require expanded consultation and cooperation with Federal, State, Local and Tribal agencies responsible for land use, natural resources and other environmental issues. The following is a list of Federal, State, Local and Tribal agencies the State DOT or MPO may chose to consult with:

- A. Elected Officials
- B. Local Government Staff
- C. Transportation Agencies (Airports, Transit, Freight Services, etc.)
- D. Local Media (TV, Radio, Print, etc.)
- E. Homeowners Associations
- F. Civic Groups
- G. Special Interested Groups
- H. Libraries (For Public Display)
- I. Consultation with Federal, State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, Conservation and historic preservation, and other environmental issues.
- J. Consultation with parties that would have an interest in the planning and development of the transportation network including affected public agencies in the metropolitan planning area.
- K. Private Freight Shippers
- L. Representatives of Public Transportation Employees
- M. Providers of Freight Transportation Services
- N. Private Providers of Transportation
- O. Representatives of Users of Public Transportation
- P. Representatives of Users of Pedestrian Walkways
- Q. Representatives of Users of Bicycle Transportation Facilities

- R. Representatives of the Disabled
- S. Indian Tribal Governments

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION LOCATIONS

Hattiesburg Train Depot (MPO Offices)	308 Newman Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401
City of Hattiesburg, City Hall	200 Forrest Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401
City of Petal, City Hall	102 West 8 th Avenue, Petal, MS 39465
Forrest County Administrative Office	641 North Main Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Lamar County Administrative Office	203 North Main Street, Purvis, MS 39475
Hattiesburg Public Library	329 Hardy Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Purvis Public Library	122 Shelby Speights Dr., Purvis, MS
Petal Public Library	714 South Main, Petal, MS
Oak Grove Public Library	4958 Old Hwy 11, Hattiesburg, MS 39401

MEDIA CONTACTS

PRINT MEDIA

Impact of Hattiesburg

The Hattiesburg American

The Lamar Times

The Advertiser News

The Petal Advocate

The Independent

The Student Printz (University of Southern Mississippi)

TELEVISION MEDIA

WHLT (CBS)

WDAM (NBC)

WLOX (ABC)

WFOX (FOX)

RADIO MEDIA

B-95 Radio – WBBN

Clear Channel Radio

The HOT FM's Radio

Kicker 108 –WZKX

Rock 104 -- WXRR

American Family Radio – WAll 89.3

Supertalk MS – WFMM

WHSY 950

Zoo 107 – WKNZ

SL 100 – WNSL

WORV 1580 AM

WJMG 92.1

Appendix C

LIMITED ENGLISH PLAN (LEP)



Limited English Proficiency Plan Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

City of Hattiesburg, Mississippi
In partnership with the
Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization
Mississippi Department of Transportation

Title VI Plan Policy Statement²

The City of Hattiesburg (City) assures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, disability or national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259) be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. The City further assures every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its programs activities, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not. In the event that the city distributes federal aid funds to another entity, the City will include Title VI language in all written agreements and will monitor for compliance.

The Department of Federal and State Programs is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, preparing required reports and other City responsibilities as required by 23 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 200 and 49 Code of Federal Regulation 21.

Limited English Proficiency Statement of Commitment

As a recipient of federal-aid funding, the City is committed to nondiscrimination in all its programs and activities whether or not those programs and activities are federally funded. This guidance clarifies the City's fulfillment of responsibilities to limited English proficient (LEP) persons, pursuant to Executive Order 13166, entitled "Improving Access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency." The City will take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the agency's programs, activities; services and information that are normally provided in English are accessible to LEP persons. Failure to ensure that LEP persons can effectively participate in federally assisted programs and activities may violate the prohibition against national origin discrimination in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

The key to providing meaningful access to LEP persons is to ensure that LEP beneficiaries can communicate effectively and act appropriately based on that communication. The City's Administration will ensure that every manager, supervisor, employee, and sub-recipient of federal-aid funds administered by the City takes reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the City recipients' programs and activities. Where possible, the agency will collect and maintain demographic statistics on persons who participate in our programs and services. In addition, every division will post written notices in a public area regarding the right to free language assistance for persons conducting business with the City in the most frequently encountered or likely to be encountered languages.

Allegations of discrimination will be brought to the immediate attention of the City of Hattiesburg, Department of Administration or a District Civil Rights Officer.

Appendix D

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Vision & Purpose for Using Social Media

In support of the Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization's Public Participation Plan's guidelines and goals, the HCMPO is seeking to further engage the public in the transportation planning process by developing outreach strategies through the use of various social media tools.

The HPFL-MPOs social media outlets serve as discussion and information sharing opportunities

between the HCMPO and the public about the HPFL-MPO, and/or other transportation-related programs, projects, activities, and events. The comments and opinions of others on official HPFL-MPO social media sites do not represent the opinions or views of the HCMPO or its staff. The HPFL-MPO encourages the public to submit any comments, questions, or concerns as related to the discussion topics presented on any social media sites, however the HPFL-MPO will moderate all comments and reserves the right to remove comments which violate the social media policy guidelines provided below.

2. Definition of Social Media

As defined by the Federal Highways Association (FHWA), "Social Media and Web 2.0 are umbrella terms used to define the various activities integrating Web technology, social interaction, and user generated content. Examples of Social Media/Web 2.0 technologies include, but are not limited to,

blogs, wikis, podcasts, social network sites, and internet-based services that emphasize collaboration and sharing (such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube)."¹

3. Employee Access

Access to social media sites will be reserved to HPFL-MPO Staff authorized by the HPFL-MPO Executive Director based on their role within the agency. Authorized staff will be restricted to professional use of the HCMPO's official social media sites. While approved staff is expected to check on social media daily (see *Account Management*), staff time must be properly allocated to higher priority tasks, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or Executive Director.

Personal use of social media is limited to access through personal devices. (Employees may consult the City of Hattiesburg Employee Handbook on "breaks".) Employees shall be advised to maintain proper privacy settings on personal accounts to prevent misrepresentation of the HPFL-MPO as an organization. While personal accounts are not linked to official HPFL-MPO social media sites, it is recommended for staff to refrain from publicly posting information that would reflect negatively on staff and the organization.

4. Account Management

Technology is ever-changing, as are the social media outlets used by the public to communication and gather new information. The HPFL-MPO currently utilizes Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as a means of communicating with the public and sharing information about local transportation issues, however the need may arise in the future for the creation of other social media tools. The following are guidelines for managing social media accounts:

1. The creation and closing of social media accounts must have final approval from the Executive Director of the HPFL-MPO.
2. The Executive Director and assigned staff will retain a record of all passwords and login information for all HPFL-MPO social media accounts. If for any reason the assigned staff members are removed from social media tasks or are no longer employed for the HPFL-MPO, all passwords will be reset and stored.
3. A log of social media statistics shall be kept by assigned staff members and shall be updated every first workday of every month.
4. No posts shall be deleted once posted. Should a correction need to be made, staff shall clarify the mistake on the same post or create an additional one.
5. Social media sites should be checked on a daily basis and responses to public comments must be answered within at least 8 working hours. Only exempt staff will be allowed to post responses after working hours.
6. Staff will be responsible for moderating social media sites.

5. Employee Conduct

All staff approved to use or maintain social media shall abide by the following guidelines:

1. Staff shall not post personal opinions on any official HPFL-MPO social media sites.
2. All information must be presented in a politically neutral, informative, and respectful manner. No vulgar language will be tolerated.
3. Staff shall respond to comments relevant to the discussion topics. Responses should be positive, polite, and neutral.
4. Staff shall present accurate information. Information that is later found to be incorrect shall be publicly corrected.
5. Staff shall respect the privacy of the public interacting on social media sites.
6. Employees should refrain from posting information that would bring embarrassment to themselves or the HPFL-MPO.
7. Staff shall abide by all federal regulations, including Title VI/LEP policies.

6. Content

Information placed on all official HPFL-MPO social media sites shall relate to the HPFL-MPO transportation planning process, MPO-related projects, events, activities, and/or news, research, discussion topics related to transportation planning. The HPFL-MPO staff will not promote information not related to topics previously discussed, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director. All content shall remain politically neutral and shall not endorse or promote specific political parties or organizations. All content is the sole responsibility of the HPFL-MPO unless cited as otherwise.

Information presented forth on HPFL-MPO social media will be used for discussion and does not represent the views or opinions of the HPFL-MPO.

7. Security

As a security measure, the use of instant messaging (IM) through approved social media sites will not be allowed, unless deemed appropriate by the Executive Director. Additionally, the exchanging of files will be limited and will only be allowed through trusted sites. While most information is considered public record, staff is advised to never send confidential information via social media. When in doubt as to whether to send certain information via social media, staff shall consult with the Executive Director.

8. Legal Issues

The use of social media by HPFL-MPO staff is limited as a business communication tool for reaching the public about MPO and other transportation-related topics. Although informal, staff is required to adhere to all

federal, state and local regulations. Additionally, all information posted to social media sites is considered public record. Any violations by staff will be handled on a case by case basis at the discretion of an immediate supervisor and the Executive Director.

9. External User Guidelines (Citizen Conduct)

The HPFL-MPO encourages the public to submit any comments, questions, or concerns on any of our official social media sites, however please note that all sites will be moderated and the following guidelines will apply:

1. We review all comments and reserve the right to delete any comments containing inappropriate and/or offensive content.
2. We do not allow obscene, graphic or discriminatory content that may infringe upon a person's Title VI rights under the Civil Rights Act of 1964²
3. We do not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.
4. All comments shall remain constructive and relevant to the posted discussion topics.
5. All comments are subject to public record.

The HPFL-MPO accepts input and comments from the public through a variety of means. Members of the public may make comments by calling the HPFL-MPO at (601) 545-6259.

Written comments may be:

1. Faxed to the HPFL-MPO staff at (601) 545-6327;
2. E-mailed to mpo@hattiesburgms.com; or
3. Mailed to the HPFL-MPO, P.O. Box 1898, Hattiesburg, Ms 39403-1898.

The public may also submit comments to their respective HPFL-MPO representatives for transmittal to the respective full committees. Comments on HPFL-MPO plans, reports, and programs may be made at public input meetings. Time scheduled on a HPFL-MPO Policy and/or Technical Committee meeting agenda also may be requested by members of the public or a representative of a group, to offer input to the full committees. All questions or concerns regarding the HPFL-MPO social media sites can be forwarded through the following outlets:

Mail To:

HPFL-MPO, P.O. Box 1898, Hattiesburg, Ms 39403-1898.

Phone: 601-545-6259

Fax: 601-545-6327

Website: www.cityofhattiesburgms.com

² Please see our Title VI Nondiscrimination Statement

Appendix E

PPP EVALUATION GUIDE

PPP EVALUATION GUIDE

Technical to Inform	Public Involvement Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Method to Meet Goal(s)
Interactive Strategies	MPO Website	#of hits	Measure # in hits per quarter looking for 5% increase per quarter	Placement of website url on all published media and through use of other PPP tools
	Social Media			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook 	# of likes, comments, shares, fans, etc.	Measure # of fans/reach annually looking for 2% increase annually.	Provide valuable information, activities, workshops, meetings, surveys, etc. on a regular basis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twitter 	# of mentions, re-tweets, replies, followers, etc.	Measure # of followers annually. Looking for 2% increase annually.	Provide valuable information, activities, workshops, meetings, surveys, etc. on a regular basis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comment Forms 	#of responses by phone calls, letters, emails, etc.	Measure meeting attendees who fill out comment forms: and/or # of website visitors submitted forms.	Identify methods for submitting public comment on all notices and through other PPP tools.
	Surveys	# of responses	# of email/mail recipients respond to survey and/or reach a goal over 150 respondents.	Make surveys available on all other PPP tools, including social media and website.
Media Outreach	Legal Advertisements	n/a required	n/a	Advertise all public engagements opportunities on newspapers with large reach
	Press Releases	# of printed or broadcasted press releases per year.	Measure # of press releases sent to media that are published.	Update contacts periodically Provide information in a “ready to print” or broadcast format.
	Other Media	N/A	N/A	Provide basic information in “print ready” format.

Technical to Inform	Public Involvement Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Method to Meet Goal(s)
Data Distribution	MPO Master Database	# of returned items	Maximum of 10% return per mailing	Make immediate corrections when items are returned
	Quarterly Newsletter	# newsletters published annually and/or downloaded online	Minimum of 2 newsletters annually. Track distributions or downloaded of newsletters	Print articles of the greatest interest to the public Notify public about newsletter through other PPP tools.
	Display Ads	# of meetings attendees who were notified via mentioned PPP tool.		Designed eye catching ads with basic information on each flyer; ads should have contact information and link to website.
	Direct Mailings	# of meeting attendees who were notified via mentioned PPP tool	# of meeting attendees/survey respondents were reached via mentioned PPP tool	Update mailing list regularly distribute to areas affected
	Email Announcements/Internet message/Boards/Calendar	# of meeting attendees who were notified via mentioned PPP tool		Update regularly; increased distribution to online websites with high traffic
	MPO Logo/QR Code	None	Recognition of logo	Placement of logo and QR code on all published media, including materials for MPO sponsored activities
	Poster/Flyers	# of meetings attendees who were notified via mentioned PPP tool.	# of meeting attendees/survey respondents were reached via mentioned PPP tool	Design eye-catching ads with basic information on each flyer; ads should have contact information and link to website.

Technical to Inform	Public Involvement Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Method to Meet Goal(s)
Data Distribution	Grouping of Projects	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Annual Project Listings	N/A	N/A	Promote individually on website annually
Public Speaking	Project Workshops/Open Houses	# of meeting attendees		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote public meetings via all other PPP tools • Schedule meetings at convenient locations and times
	Public Meetings/Hearings	# of meeting attendees		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote public meetings via all other PPP tools • Schedule meetings at convenient locations and times.

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Appendix F

HPFL PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

