

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



07/25/2018

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 that 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.

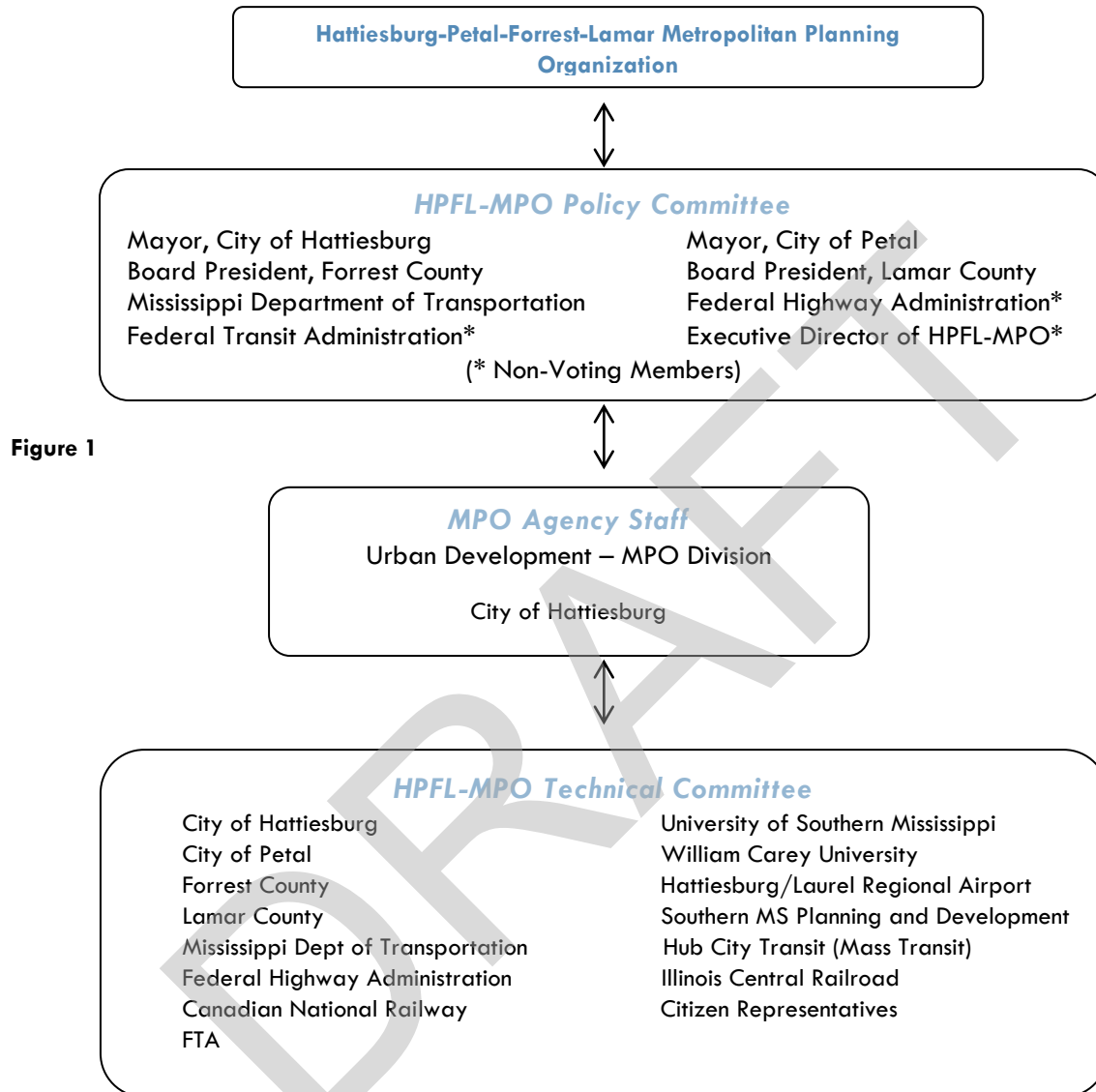
Mississippi Governor William Winter established the Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization in August 1982. The HPFL-MPO was established when the Hattiesburg central area reached a population status of 50,000 plus. The HPFL-MPO area consists of the City of Hattiesburg, the 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 Policy Committee serves as the official governing authority for the MPO and is responsible for making policy decisions regarding the transportation planning process. The HPFL-MPO Policy Committee is comprised of local elected and appointed officials representing the counties and municipalities located in the Hattiesburg MPO urbanized area, as well as leadership from the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Executive Director of the MPO, the Division Administrator for the Federal Highway

Administration (FHWA) and Regional Administrator Federal Transit Administration. 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. Citizen 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-making 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 provision of reports that are clear, timely and broadly distributed.
- Periodic review and revision of the public participation process.
- Promotion of dialogue and partnership among the community, the business community, organizations, other interested citizens and public officials.

## SECTION II      FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

### C.    Guiding Regulations

Public outreach in Long Range transportation plan has long been a federal requirement. Federal law includes a number of specific requirements and performance standards and expectations for state departments of transportation and MPOs to follow during the transportation planning process. These requirements have been amended and reinforced through various transportation and environmental legislation, and related regulations and orders addressing environmental justice and persons with disabilities. Guiding regulations for the transportation process include, but may not necessarily be limited to the following:

- Title 23 United States Code (USC) Sections 134 and 135
- Federal regulation Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Section 450
- Federal regulation Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R) Section 613
- The American with Disabilities Act of 1990, which was updated in 2010, requires coordinating with disabled communities and providing access to sites where public involvement activities occur as well as the information presented.
- Executive Order #12898 of February 11, 1994, reinforces the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and focuses attention to address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.
- Executive Order # 13166 of August 11, 2000, requires federal agencies and other entities that receive federal funds via grants, contracts, or subcontracts to make their activities accessible to persons with Limited English Proficiency.
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Public Law, 114-94, December

2015

- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), Public Law 112-141, July 2012
- Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU), Public Law 109-59, August 2005
- Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), Public Law 105-178; June 1998
- Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Public Law 102-240; December 1991

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 within the Department of Urban Development. Consultation between local planning agencies, engineering consultants and other departments of city, county and regional government (i.e. Emergency Management) is continual.

The HPFL-MPO shall appropriately involve the American Indian Tribes in the development of the Long Range 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 Long Range 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 Long Range Transportation Plan, 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 Long Range Transportation Plan, 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 Long Range Transportation Plan and TIP (including the financial plans for the TIP and Long Range 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 LRTP 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. Fast Act 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 45 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 45-day comment period. Notice will also be mailed to the entire HPFL-MPO mailing list prior to the start of the 45-day comment period.

7. Provide a public comment period of not less than 45 calendar days prior to adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the TIP, 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 to assure 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 continued basis by making all publications and work products available electronically to the public via the MPO's web page (via internet) and at the MPO office by furnishing printed or digital media and displaying maps, as a visualization technique, to describe transportation actions as part of the Long Range 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 [hattiesburgms.com/MPO](http://hattiesburgms.com/MPO). 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 a 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, Long Range Transportation Plan, 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.

In accordance with Federal regulations, the Public Participation Plan (PPP) shall be assessed periodically based on changes in local, state, or federal legislation, and in response to periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of public participation techniques outlined in the PPP. The PPP is a living document that shall be updated as needed. However, at the minimum, the PPP shall be formally reviewed every five-years and modified as needed to expand its usefulness as a tool to encourage public input into the transportation planning process.

## **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 Long Range 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's times and contact information. Work products, such as the Draft, and Adopted, Public Participation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plan, Pathways Master Plan, and other studies are available from the site. The website address is [hattiesburgms.com/MPO](http://hattiesburgms.com/MPO). HPFL-MPO staff, in conjunction with City of Hattiesburg staff, maintain, update and regularly review the website. 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, 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 neighborhood/homeowners association contacts. 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 may utilize social media to further encourage the interaction between the MPO and the public. Facebook may be used to present the public with information concerning the MPO and other programs, projects, activities, events, etc. YouTube, a video-sharing website may be 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 maintains and regularly reviews 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** legislates the methods by which public meetings are conducted. Title 25, Chapter 41, Sections 1-17 of the Mississippi Code define the law. 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 HPFL-MPO Transportation Policy Committee and HPFL-MPO Technical Committee meetings.

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

## DISPLAY ADS

**Description:** Publication of ads 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, neighborhood/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. 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, and all public meetings are posted to the HPFL-MPO website and 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

**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.

**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.

## 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.

**Emergency Accommodations:** In order to provide a venue for a public hearing that does not include social contact and provides flexibility regarding any safety concerns about the meeting facility or general meeting location, the MPO staff will create a virtual meeting option for all of the HPFL-MPO public hearings.

**Activities:** Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, corridor studies, Project Development & Environmental studies, and other planning studies as needed for other MPO activities.

## COMMENT FORMS

**Description:** Comment 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 F)

**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 forms 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 also uses brief one-question surveys through the MPO Website, Facebook page, or other survey applications 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:** MPOs make use of statewide project groupings in their Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP). MDOT in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration developed statewide programs that are identified by a statewide project number. This number provides a more efficient method of project identification, programming and contracting which 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 were obligated the preceding year. This listing 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 let. These posts also include the status of the project throughout the duration of the project.

## SECTION IV SUMMARY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY TABLE

<i><b>Program Adoption</b></i>	<i><b>Public Meetings</b></i>	<i><b>Comment Period (minimum)</b></i>	<i><b>Purpose/Remarks</b></i>
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	Two meetings prior to Technical Policy Committee approval Updated Every 5 years	45 Days	A summary of all oral and written comments will be provided to the Technical Policy Committee 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	45 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.	N/A	Updated every 2 years. 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 5 years. Comments received are recorded, distributed and placed in MPO minutes for public review.
Annual Project Listing	Not Applicable	N/A	An Update is provided by the MPO on an annual basis and made available for viewing at the MPO website.
<i><b>Program Amendments</b></i>			



Long Range Transportation Plan	MPO Policy and Technical Committee Public Hearing/Meeting	10 days	Amendments are applied as needed.
Transportation Improvement Plan	MPO Policy and Technical Committee Public Hearing/Meeting	10 days	Amendments are applied as needed.
Unified Planning Work Program	MPO Policy and Technical Committee Public Hearing/Meeting	N/A	Amendments are applied as needed.
<b>Open Meetings</b>			
Transportation Policy Committee (TPC)	Regular Meetings are held on a quarterly basis.	N/A	Website is updated with meeting dates.
Transportation Technical Committee (TTC)	Regular Meetings are held on a quarterly basis.	N/A	Website is updated with meeting dates.

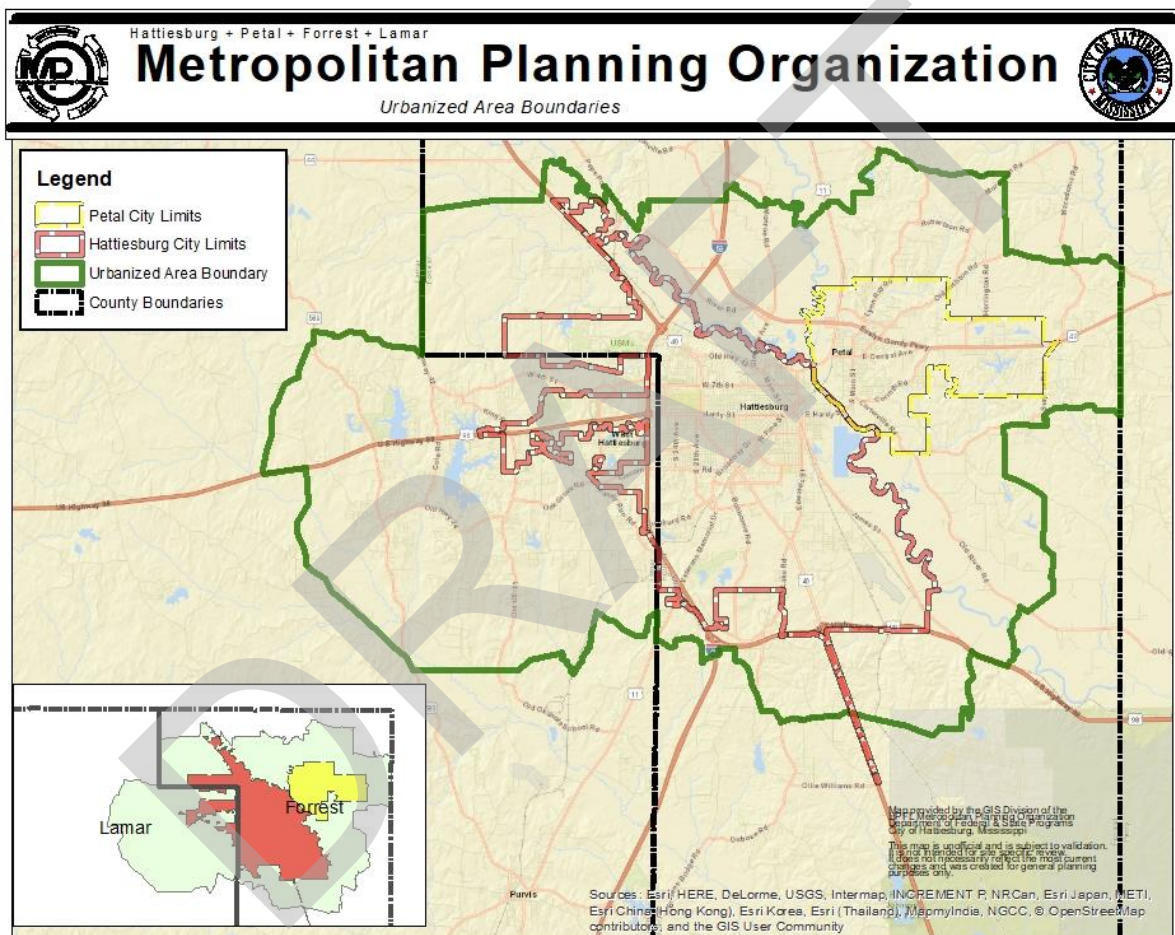


# APPENDICES

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 the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (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 with which the State DOT or MPO may choose to consult:

- 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/Neighborhood 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. American Indian Tribes

## PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION LOCATIONS

City of Hattiesburg, City Hall (MPO Offices)	200 Forrest Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401
City of Hattiesburg, City Hall	200 Forrest Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401
City of Petal, City Hall	102 West 8 <sup>th</sup> 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*  
*Hattiesburg Post*  
*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)

This LEP Plan exists as a component of the City of Hattiesburg's Title VI Plan as it existed as of July 25, 2018, copied herein with minor corrections for Scribner's errors.

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## LEP Plan

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*City of Hattiesburg, Limited English Proficiency Plan*

*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*

Department of Federal and State Programs  
In partnership with the  
Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Mississippi Department of Transportation

*July 2017*

## INTRODUCTION

On August 11, 2000, President William J. Clinton signed an executive order, Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, to clarify Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It had as its purpose, to ensure accessibility to programs and services to otherwise eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language.

This executive order stated that individuals who do not speak English well and who have a limited ability to read, write and speak, or understand English are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter. These individuals are referred to as being limited in their ability to speak, read, write, or understand English, hence the designation, "LEP," or Limited English Proficient. The Executive Order states that:

"Each federal agency shall prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons. Each plan shall be consistent with the standards set forth in the LEP Guidance, and shall include the steps the agency will take to ensure that eligible LEP persons can meaningfully access the agency's programs and activities."

Not only do all federal agencies have to develop LEP plans as a condition of receiving federal financial assistance, recipients have to comply with Title VI and LEP guidelines of the federal agency from which funds are provided as well.

Federal financial assistance includes grants, training, use of equipment, donations of surplus property, and other assistance. Recipients of federal funds range from state and local agencies, to nonprofits and organizations. Title VI covers a recipient's entire program or activity. This means all parts of a recipient's operations are covered, even if only one part of a recipient's organization receives the federal assistance. Simply put, any organization that receives federal financial assistance is required to follow this Executive Order.

The City of Hattiesburg receives funds from the US Department of Transportation via the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

The U.S. Department of Transportation published Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Person in the December 14th, 2005 Federal Register.

This guidance applies to all DOT funding recipients, which include state departments of transportation, state motor vehicle administrations, airport operators, metropolitan planning organizations, and regional, state, and local transit operators, among many others. Coverage extends to a recipient's entire program or activity, i.e., to all parts of a recipient's operations. This is true even if only one part of the recipient receives the Federal assistance.

### **Elements of an Effective LEP Policy**

The US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division has developed a set of elements that may be helpful in designing and LEP policy or plan. These elements include:

1. Identifying LEP persons who need language assistance
2. Identifying ways in which language assistance will be provided
3. Training Staff
4. Providing notice to LEP persons
5. The recommended method of evaluating accessibility to available transportation services is the Four-Factor Analysis identified by the US DOT.

These recommended plan elements have been incorporated into this plan.

### **Methodology for Assessing Needs for an Effective LEP Policy**

The DOT guidance outlines four factors recipients should apply to the various kinds of contacts they have with the public to assess language needs and decide what reasonable steps they should take to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee.
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to the LEP Community.
4. The resources available to the City of Hattiesburg.

The greater the number or proportion of eligible LEP persons; the greater the frequency with which they have contact with a program, activity, or service and the greater the importance of that program, activity, or service, the more likely enhanced language services will be needed. The intent of DOT's guidance is to suggest a balance that ensures meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on small organizations and local governments.

The DOT guidance is modeled after the Department of Justice's guidance and requires recipients and sub recipients to take steps to ensure meaningful access their programs and activities to LEP persons. More information for recipients and sub recipients can be found at <http://www.lep.gov>.

## The Four-Factor Analysis

This plan uses the recommended four-factor analysis of an individualized assessment considering the four factors outlined above. Each of the following factors is examined to determine the level and extent of language assistance measures required to sufficiently ensure meaningful access to City of Hattiesburg's services and activities that may affect their quality of life. Recommendations are then based on the results of the analysis.

### **Factor 1:**

#### The Proportion, Numbers and Distribution of LEP Persons

The Census Bureau has a range of four classifications of how well people speak English. The classifications are 'very well', 'not well', 'well', and 'not at all'. For our planning purposes, we are considering people that speak English less than 'very well' as Limited English Proficient persons. As seen in Table #1 (below), the U.S. Census American Community Survey Selected Population Tables (2015 American Fact Finder 2). Data for City of Hattiesburg shows that 2,417 (5.6%) individuals speak a language other than English; of those individuals, 1,255 (2.9%) individuals have identified themselves as speaking English less than 'very well.' Data for West Hattiesburg shows that 188 (3.1%) individuals speak a language other than English; of those individuals, 74 (1.2%) have identified themselves as speaking English less than 'very well'.

Table 1  
City of Hattiesburg

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME	# Individuals	Percent
Population 5 years and over	43,451	100%
English only	41,034	94.4%
Language other than English	2,417	5.6%
Speak English less than "very well"	1,255	2.9%
Spanish	1,305	3.0%
Speak English less than "very well"	791	1.8%
Other Indo-European languages	509	1.2%
Speak English less than "very well"	139	0.3%
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	505	1.2%
Speak English less than "very well"	278	0.6%
Other languages	98	0.2%
Speak English less than "very well"	47	0.1%

*West Hattiesburg*

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME	# Individuals	Percent
Population 5 years and over	6,037	100%
Language other than English	188	3.10%
Speak English less than "very well"	123	2.00%
Spanish	79	1.30%
Speak English less than "very well"	74	1.20%
Other Indo-European languages	43	0.70%
Speak English less than "very well"	0	0.00%
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	66	1.10%
Speak English less than "very well"	49	0.80%
Other languages	0	0.00%
Speak English less than "very well"	0	0.00%

**Factor 2:**

## Frequency of Contact with LEP Individuals

With the City of Hattiesburg's LEP population less than 5% and 1,000 individuals the frequency of contact is definitely at a minimum. Because the City of Hattiesburg does not have large population LEP services are provided on minimal level and as needed basis due to the unpredictable and infrequent request for services. The City reaches out to the LEP population by providing information in English and Spanish in public areas, such as transit and public facilities, including but not limited to vehicles, train depot, ticket kiosks, and city offices.

The City of Hattiesburg identifies safety as its most critical service to provide the LEP population. With limited resources available and a population base of less than 1% for those who speak English less than "very well", the city utilizes resources in the community such as the two major universities, to provide translation services.

The city has partnered with additional agencies such as the Mississippi Department of Transportation, to assist with providing materials and information to disseminate during major incidents or activities.

**Factor 3:**

## The Nature and Importance of the Program, Activity, or Service to LEP

The City of Hattiesburg being a small urban area in the area of finances, the city utilizes outside resources and organizations to assist in providing information for the LEP population. The LEP community is involved in city functions such as church, school, transit, shopping and other activities, and the COH is focused on helping the LEP population with daily functions. The City plans utilization of additional resources such the internet, television, radio and Spanish speaking church congregations to disseminate pertinent information. In addition, the city's Department of Human Resources and Hattiesburg Police

Department and Department of Federal and State Programs have listing of employees who are able to assist with translation and interpretation services.

**Factor 4:**

The Resources Available to the City of Hattiesburg and Overall Cost

U.S. Department of Transportation Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons published in the Federal Register: December 14, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 239) states:

"A recipient's level of resources and the costs imposed may have an impact on the nature of the steps it should take in providing meaningful access for LEP persons. Smaller recipients with more limited budgets are not expected to provide the same level of language services as larger recipients with larger budgets. In addition, "reasonable steps" may cease to be reasonable where the costs imposed substantially exceed the benefits. Recipients should carefully explore the most cost-effective means of delivering competent and accurate language services before limiting services due to resource concerns. "

Based on this guidance, we have reviewed our resources and deemed that given the low concentration of LEP individuals in our city, upon request we will translate our vital documents into the language requested to ensure accessibility.

Although there will not be a fixed amount allocated from our yearly budget for the translation of documents, the cost associated with the necessary translation of document in order to comply with LEP requirements will be allocated on an as-needed basis.

The City of Hattiesburg will, on a continuing basis, identify documents that are routinely provided to the citizens of Hattiesburg that will be translated into languages other than English as well as ensure meaningful access to all programs, activities and/or benefits for LEP persons.

**Safe Harbor Stipulation**

Federal law provides a "Safe Harbor" situation so that recipients can ensure with greater certainty that they comply with their obligation to provide written translations in languages other than English. A "safe harbor" means that if a recipient provides written translation in certain circumstances, such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient's written-translation obligations under Title VI.

The failure to provide written translations under the circumstances does not mean there is noncompliance, but rather provides a guide for recipients that would like greater certainty of compliance than can be provided by a fact-intensive, four factor analysis. For example, even if a safe harbor is not used, if written translation of a certain document(s) would be so burdensome as to defeat the legitimate objectives of its program, it is not necessary.

Other ways of providing meaningful access, such as effective oral interpretation of certain vital documents, might be acceptable under such circumstances. Strong evidence of compliance with the recipient's written translation obligations under "safe harbor" includes providing written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered. Translation of other documents, if needed, can be provided orally.



B VB This "Safe Harbor" provision applies to the translation of written documents only. It does not affect the requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters where oral language services are needed and are reasonable. Given the low concentration of LEP individuals (as seen in Table #1) we have deemed that the City of Hattiesburg will provide written translations of all vital documents upon request. Vital documents will include, but not be limited to: the complaint form, complaint procedures, and all public meeting notices.

### **Providing Notice to LEP Persons**

U.S. DOT LEP guidance says:

Once an agency has decided, based on the four factors, that it will provide language service, it is important that the recipient notify LEP persons of services available free of charge. Recipients should provide this notice in languages LEP persons would understand. The guidance provides several examples of notification including:

1. Signage in languages that an LEP would understand when free language assistance is available with advance notice.
2. Stating in outreach documents that free language services are available from the agency.
3. Working with community-based organization and other stakeholders to inform LEP individuals of the recipient's services, including the availability of language assistance services. Statements in languages that an LEP individual would understand will be placed in public information and public notices that persons requiring language assistance or special accommodations will be provided the requested assistance at no cost, with reasonable advance notice to the City of Hattiesburg.

### **LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PLAN**

Considering the relatively small scale of the City of Hattiesburg, the small concentration of LEP individuals in the service area, and the City's financial resources; it necessary to limit language aid to the most basic and cost-effective services. Other than the previously mentioned vital documents, if there is additional language assistance measures required for LEP individuals, the City shall proceed with oral interpretation options to meet all requests for those language groups to ensure equal access while also complying with LEP regulations.

- With advance notice of seven calendar days, the City will provide interpreter services at public meetings, including language translation and signage for the hearing impaired.
- The City will utilize the Translators Resource List as provided by the LEP Liaison of the City of Hattiesburg for translation services and verbal interpretation.
- Ensure placement of statements in notices and publications in languages other than English that interpreter services are available for public meetings.
- The Census Bureau "I-speak" Language Identification Card will be distributed to all employees that may potentially encounter LEP individuals.
- Once the LEP individual's language has been identified, an agency from the Translator's Resource List will be contacted to provide interpretation services.
- Publications of the city's complaint form available at public meetings.

**LEP Services**

The LEP Liaison will identify and maintain an inventory of Language Assistance Services (LAS) providers available to all City personnel.

- Contract language service providers (LSP). All LAS will be made available to LEP persons at the expense of the City, where the circumstances indicate the provision of LEP services is appropriate and required.

**Training**

The City of Hattiesburg, Hub City Transit and sub-recipients should know their obligations to provide meaningful access to information and services for LEP persons, and all persons in public contact positions should be properly trained. An effective training objective would likely include training to ensure Hub City Transit operations and their sub recipients:

- Hub City Transit and sub-recipients know about LEP policies and procedures.
- Hub City Transit and sub-recipients who have contact with the public (or those in a recipient's custody) are trained to utilize interpreter services effectively.
- Hub City Transit and sub-recipients shall include this training as part of the orientation provided for new employees.

Management staff, even if they do not interact regularly with LEP persons, should be fully aware of and understand the plan so they can reinforce its importance and ensure its implementation by staff. Training will be arranged by the Department of Federal and State Programs

**LEP Accommodations**

The LEP Liaison and management will, on a continuing basis, identify vital documents that are routinely provided to stakeholders that will be translated into languages other than English. The translation of vital documents into languages other than English is particularly important where a significant number or percentage of the customers served and/or eligible to be served have limited English proficiency. Whether or not a document is vital depends on how significant the impact on the health, safety, legal rights, or livelihood of an LEP person may be. Written documents include electronic documents and web-sites. Vital documents may include materials such as:

- Emergency transportation information;
- Notices of public hearings and proposed transportation plans;
- Community education materials;
- Notices notifying LEP persons of language assistance at no cost to the LEP person;
- Markings, signs and packaging for hazardous materials and substances;
- Signs in waiting rooms, reception areas, and other initial points of entry;
- Instructions on how to participate in a recipient's program.

The LEP Liaison will coordinate with the LSP to have identified documents translated accordingly. Translated documents will be made available as requested.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

- a. Any LEP individual has a Right to File a Complaint against the city where he or she believes that the city did not provide necessary LEP services as appropriate. These complaints include those available under Title VI of the Civil rights Act of 1964.
- b. All complaints, alleging a violation under Title VI will be referred to the Title VI Coordinator or the City Attorney.
- c. The Title VI Coordinator and the City Attorney will take appropriate steps to resolve all complaints in accordance with the agency's discrimination complaint procedures.
- d. The Title VI Liaison will maintain a database tracking requests for all complaints and their resolution. The Complaint Resolution Form will be completed and served to the aggrieved resident. A database will include the following items:
  1. Source of complaint
  2. LEP request including relevant contact information
  3. Nature of complaint request
  4. Date complaint/request received
  5. Date complaint/request resolved
  6. Manner of resolution
  7. Comments
- e. Fact-finding procedures by Title VI Liaison and City Attorney will follow the investigation protocol in the Title VI Plan.
- f. Mediation and Hearings
- g. Interpreters will be made available to hearing participants upon request or where CRD staff identifies a need for an interpreter.

## **OFFICE**

1. Provide an I-speak language identification card to determine the language spoken of the LEP individual.
2. Once the foreign language is determined, provide information to Title VI coordinator who will contact an interpreter from the Translators Resource List.
3. If the need is for a document to be translated, the Title VI Coordinator will have the document translated and provided to the requestor as soon as possible.

## **ROAD**

1. Road crew employee will immediately contact the Title VI Coordinator for assistance, and provide an I-speak language identification card to the LEP individual to determine the language spoken of the individual.
2. Once the foreign language is determined, provide information to Title VI Coordinator who will contact an interpreter from the Translators Resource List to provide telephonic interpretation.

3. If the need is for a document to be translated, the Title VI Coordinator will have the document translated and provided to the requestor as soon as possible.

IN WRITING

1. Once a letter has been received it will be immediately forwarded to the Title VI Coordinator.
2. The Title VI Coordinator will contact a translator from the Translators Resource List to determine the specifics of the letter request information.
3. The Title VI Coordinator will work with the selected agency to provide the requested service to the individual in a timely manner.

OVER THE PHONE

1. If someone calls into our office speaking another language every attempt will be made to keep that individual on the line until an interpreter can be conference into the line and if possible determine the language spoken of the caller.
2. Once the language spoken by the caller has been identified we will proceed with providing the requested assistance to the LEP individual.

***LEP Plan Access***

A copy of the LEP plan document can be requested at the City of Hattiesburg Department of Federal and State Programs, HPFL-MPO Division. The City of Hattiesburg will also post the LEP Plan on a bulletin board at the Hattiesburg's City Hall and make the plan available on the City of Hattiesburg website [www.hattiesburgms.com](http://www.hattiesburgms.com).

Any person or agency may also request a copy by contacting:

**HPFL-MPO Division Manager City of Hattiesburg  
P.O. Box 1898  
Hattiesburg, MS 39403-1898  
601-545-6259**

# Appendix D

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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## 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 HPFL-MPO 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 HPFL-MPO 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 HPFL-MPO 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.

Social Media should be used as a means of additional public notification and to seek public input, but neither staff nor the public should expect the use of social media by MPO staff to replace more traditional methods of conducting business.

### 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).

### 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 HPFL-MPO'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 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 by 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 periodically as deemed reasonable..
4. Social media sites should be checked on a periodic basis in order to respond to public comments. Efforts will be made to respond in a timely fashion. Sites may be checked more or less frequently as deemed reasonable given recent relevant posts or topics.
5. Staff will be responsible for moderating social media sites on a periodic basis as may be reasonable given relevant posts or recent topics that may have been presented.
6. The MPO makes no claims as to whether or not communication existing on social media may constitute a public record. The MPO cannot control edit or deletions of content by persons or entities other than MPO staff.

## **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 or the member entities.
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 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 1964 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.
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.

#### **10. Public Records Comment**

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](mailto: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

Website: [www.cityofhattiesburgms.com](http://www.cityofhattiesburgms.com)

<sup>2</sup> Please see our Title VI Nondiscrimination Statement

# Appendix E

## PPP EVALUATION GUIDE

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## 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 # of hits per quarter looking for 5% annual increases	Placement of website url on all published media and through use of other PPP tools
	Social Media			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook</li> </ul>	# of likes, comments, shares, fans, etc.	Measure # of fans/reach annually looking for 2% annual increases.	Provide valuable information, activities, workshops, meetings, surveys, etc. on a regular basis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment Forms</li> </ul>	#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)
<b>Data Distribution</b>	MPO Master Database	# of returned items	Maximum of 10% return per mailing	Make immediate corrections when items are returned
	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/ Calendars	# of meeting attendees who were notified via mentioned PPP tool		Update regularly; increased distribution to online websites with high traffic
	MPO Logo	None	Recognition of logo	Placement of logo 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)
<b>Data Distribution</b>	Grouping of Projects	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Annual Project Listings	N/A	N/A	Promote individually on website annually

<b>Public Speaking</b>	Project Workshops/Open Houses	# of meeting attendees		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote public meetings via all other PPP tools</li> <li>Schedule meetings at convenient locations and times</li> </ul>
	Public Meetings/Hearings	# of meeting attendees		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote public meetings via all other PPP tools</li> <li>Schedule meetings at convenient locations and times.</li> </ul>

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Written comments may be:

1. Faxed to the HPFL-MPO staff at (601)545-6259;
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# Appendix F

## HPFL PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

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# HPFL-MPO PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

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