

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

SARASOTA/MANATEE

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Adopted June 22, 2009

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I. BACKGROUND

The Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was established in 1978 following the passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1974 to develop plans, policies and priorities that serve to guide local decision making on transportation issues.

The MPO policy board is made up of local elected officials representing Sarasota and Manatee Counties, the municipalities and the airport authority. Its purpose is to establish transportation policies and evaluate transportation needs for the bi-county area. The Board meets at the Sudakoff Center on the New College of Sarasota campus. The meetings begin at 9:30 AM and are held on the 4th Monday in the months of January, March, April, June, July, September, October, and December. All meetings of the Board are open to the public.

The MPO is required to establish and maintain agreements with its member governments as well as its grantors. The agreements fall into four categories:

- Agreements required to establish and organize the MPO;
- Agreements involving federal “pass through” and state matching funds;
- Agreements involving 100% state grant funds; and
- Agreements involving MPO financial support of local government planning activities.

The MPO has two standing advisory committees as well as its own technical staff. The Technical Advisory Committee is made up of State, County and City planning and engineering staff and meets regularly on the second Monday of each month. The Citizens Advisory Committee is composed of citizens representing each member government of the MPO and meets regularly on the first Thursday of each month. The Citizens Advisory Committee members are recommended for appointment by their local governmental body and confirmed by the MPO. The MPO Board occasionally establishes ad hoc committees to address special projects.

The MPO staff consists of an Executive Director, Planning Manager and three Transportation Planners, a Human Resources/Fiscal Manager and an Office Manager. On a regular basis the committees, along with the MPO staff provide recommendations to the MPO Board regarding short and long range planning, implementation of projects and related issues. The MPO Board and each of its advisory committees operate under bylaws approved by the MPO Board.

The MPO is the designated official planning agency to receive the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Funds for planning for the transportation disadvantaged in the urbanized area. There are two standing Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Boards (Sarasota County and Manatee County) that are chaired by an elected official from the county in which their board serves.

The principal responsibilities of the MPO include the development of a 25-year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), a Congestion Management Process (CMP), a five-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and related planning studies and projects deemed necessary to address

transportation issues in the Sarasota and Manatee County area. Local transportation needs are reevaluated annually. Based on this evaluation, project priorities are established and forwarded to the Florida Department of Transportation for inclusion into its Five Year Work Program. The MPO then adopts annually a 5year TIP. Additionally, MPOs are required to develop and adopt a minimum 25-year LRTP.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations to provide projects and strategies that will:

- Support the economic vitality of the United States, the State's non-metropolitan areas and metropolitan areas, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
- 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.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and for freight throughout the State.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

The role of public participation in transportation planning and programming was increased with the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), passed in 1998, continued to emphasize public participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process. TEA-21 required that the metropolitan planning organization work cooperatively with the state department of transportation and the regional transit operator to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation and representatives of users of public transit a reasonable opportunity to comment on proposed transportation plans and programs.

The intent of the public participation provisions in SAFETEA-LU passed in August 2005, is to continue the legacy of ISTEA and TEA-21 when it comes to increasing public awareness and participation in transportation planning and programming, while developing a documented public participation plan that defines the process for citizen input.

On June 9, 2006, the U.S. Department of Transportation proposed rules that incorporate the provisions of SAFETEA-LU. The proposed rules under Section 450.316 require that metropolitan planning organizations develop a public participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and “will, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies and desired outcomes for ten specific provisions.” These ten provisions are below:

1. Provide adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
2. Provide timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes.
3. Employ visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs.
4. Make public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web.
5. Hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.
6. Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
7. Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation

systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.

8. Provide an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was initially made available for public comment.
9. Coordinate with statewide transportation planning public participation and consultation processes (as outlined under subpart B of Section 450.316).
10. Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

In order to adequately respond to the above mandate, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO places an emphasis on securing public participation. This includes developing a public outreach program to bring in segments of the community that may have been previously excluded from full participation in the transportation planning and decision-making process.

In addition to the Federal requirements, Florida Statutes Chapter 339.175 sets forth an operating framework for each MPO to engage the public. The Chapter includes information such as voting membership, authority and responsibilities, committee appointments, and the development of plans and programs involved in transportation planning. The Florida law also requires that certain mechanisms be established to ensure citizen participation and to allow interested parties an opportunity to review and provide comments on plans and programs prior to approval by the MPO.

Regulations for public access to government proceedings held in the State of Florida are detailed in Florida Statutes Chapter 286. The “Sunshine Law” requires that:

- Meetings of boards or commissions must be open to the public;
- Reasonable public notice of such meetings must be provided; and
- The minutes of the meetings will be promptly recorded, and such records will be open to public inspection.

Other policies have been established which reinforce the need for public participation such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. NEPA and subsequent Environmental Policy Statements (EPS) issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) constitute a framework of policies and procedures supporting the protection of the environment. In this case the term “environment” includes the natural environment, the built environment, the cultural and social fabric of our country, our neighborhoods, and the quality of life of the people who live here. With regards to systems planning and programming the FHWA policy includes language that requires agencies at the federal level to:

- Encourage and help state transportation agencies, MPOs, and local governments to take a leadership role in identifying and considering social, economic, and environmental concerns as early as possible in the development of transportation and land use plans and programs.
- Advocate broad-based public participation by these agencies to generate consensus on transportation and land use solutions and the purpose and need for transportation investments.

The 1994 Presidential Executive Order on Environmental Justice stems from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Order mandates that all Federal Agencies and recipients of Federal funds (MPOs) conduct public participation activities that ensure the involvement of low income and minority groups in decision making, prevent disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low income and minority groups, and assure that these groups receive equal benefits from transportation improvements.

The 2000 Presidential Executive Order on improving access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), further clarified Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Its purpose was to ensure accessibility to programs and services to 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, 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. It 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.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY STATEMENT

It is a Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) policy to support and encourage public participation in the planning process relating to transportation systems and facilities. The MPO's public participation plan is designed to ensure opportunities for the public to express its views on transportation issues and to become active participants in the decision making process. The MPO participates in outreach efforts specifically designed to provide members of the minority and low-income community an opportunity to participate in the transportation decision-making process.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

IV 1. General Guidelines

This Public Participation Plan provides direction for public participation activities conducted by the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and contains the policies, goals, objectives, and techniques used by the MPO for public participation. In its public participation process, the 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 Program, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are 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 Transportation Improvement Program, 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 will be made available.
4. Respond in writing to all applicable public input. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan (including the financial plan) as a result of the public participation process or the interagency consultation process required under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments will be made part of the final plan.
5. Solicit the needs of those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with limited English proficiency, and low-income households.
6. Provide a public comment period of 45 calendar days prior to the adoption of the Public Participation Plan and/or any amendments. Notice of the 45-day comment period will be advertised in two newspapers of general circulation, minority community newspapers, and various other publications prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period and on both the Manatee County and Sarasota County Government Access Television Channels. Notice will also be mailed to the entire MPO mailing/email list prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period.

7. Provide the public a reasonable period of time to review and make comments on the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, any amendments or updates, or other appropriate transportation plans and projects prior to its adoption or endorsement by the MPO Board.
8. Coordinate its Public Participation Process with other state and local Public Participation Processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduce redundancies and costs.

IV 2. Public Participation Goal, Objectives, and Policies

GOAL: To Provide The Public With Information On Transportation Planning Services And Project Development In A Thorough, Convenient, And Timely Manner.

Objective 1: The Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will actively engage the public in the transportation planning process according to the policies contained in this Public Participation Plan and State and Federal law.

Policy 1.1: The MPO will maintain an up-to-date database of contacts including at a minimum the following persons:

- Elected Officials
- Local Government Staff
- Transportation Agencies (port, airports, transit, etc.)
- Local Media
- Homeowners' Associations
- Civic Groups
- Special Interest Groups
- Sarasota and Manatee County Libraries (for public display)
- Individuals expressing an interest in transportation planning activities

Policy 1.2: The MPO will mail or email meeting announcements, invitations to the MPO contact list or to targeted groups for upcoming activities.

Objective 2: The MPO will keep the public informed of ongoing transportation related activities on a continuous basis.

Policy 2.1: The MPO will make all publications and work products available to the public on the MPO website and the MPO staff office.

Policy 2.2: MPO staff will be available to provide general and project-specific information during normal business hours, and after hours at the request of groups such as homeowners' associations.

Policy 2.3: The MPO will produce a newsletter.

Policy 2.4: The MPO will maintain an Internet web site, updated as needed to provide the most current information available.

Policy 2.5: The MPO will employ visualization techniques, interactive maps, project-specific maps and graphs, digital photography, Geographical Information Systems, map overlays, PowerPoint presentations, aerial photography, technical drawings, charts and graphs.

Objective 3: The MPO will encourage the involvement of all Sarasota and Manatee County citizens in the transportation planning process.

Policy 3.1: Target audiences will be identified for each planning study conducted by the MPO, including residents, business and property owners and those traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, including low income and minority households, within the study area.

Policy 3.2: The MPO will hold public meetings at a site convenient to potentially affected citizens whenever possible.

Policy 3.3: The MPO will implement its Limited English Proficiency Plan to provide an opportunity to participate in MPO programs for individuals who are limited in their use of the English language.

Objective 4: The MPO will continuously improve the Public Participation Program.

Policy 4.1: The MPO will evaluate public participation techniques, according to the procedures contained in the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization's Public Participation Evaluation Guide.

Policy 4.2: This Public Participation Plan and the Evaluation Guide will be reviewed at least every three (3) years.

Objective 5: The MPO will participate in public participation activities for individual transportation improvement projects from the planning phase through construction.

Policy 5.1: The MPO will assist the Florida Department of Transportation, local governments and other transportation agencies in the development and implementation of public participation activities.

Policy 5.2: The MPO will participate in the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Program

IV. 3 Public Participation Techniques

Public Participation is an ongoing activity of the MPO, with several techniques continuously occurring. 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 used by the MPO. Included with the description is a list of activities each tool may be used for.

MPO Web Site

Description: The site was established in November 2000 with 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 Unified Planning Work Program, the Transportation Improvement Program and the Long Range Transportation Plan are available for downloading from the site. The site provides many links to other transportation related sites from the local to national level. In 2009 the website received a major redesign and has been made more user friendly. The site is maintained and updated by MPO staff.

Activities: The site is used to promote regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications and work products.

MPO Master Database

Description: MPO staff maintains a master database of all contacts, both business and public, on a continuous basis. The database includes committee membership, mailing information, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail and internet addresses. The database is used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists, special interest groups and homeowners' association contacts, and the newsletter mailing list. Membership lists generated using the database are provided to the public, municipalities and other agencies upon request. 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 participation activities.

Legal Advertisements

- Description:* The MPO regularly advertises the MPO Board, the Technical Advisory Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee meetings. The ads provide a description of the meeting agenda, including contact information.
- Activities:* Regular monthly meetings, other public meetings, rule changes.

Quarterly Newsletter (Under development for 2010)

- Description:* MPO staff will produce a periodic newsletter. Each issue of the newsletter includes transportation related news, staff contact information, meeting schedules, and current planning project status reports.
- Activities:* The newsletter is to disseminate transportation news, promote regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications, and work products.

Display Ads

- Description:* These ads promote meetings that are not regularly scheduled, such as corridor study workshops. They are published in the local section of the newspaper in order to reach a larger audience.
- Activities:* Project specific meetings, workshops, open houses, or hearings.

Project-specific Newsletters

- Description:* For individual projects, such as corridor studies, that are typically performed using consulting services, newsletters are often used to address specific project issues. These newsletters are mailed to targeted residents, businesses and property owners in the area that are expected to be impacted by a particular study. Information regarding upcoming project meetings, alternatives being proposed in the area, and other project news is reported in these newsletters.
- Activities:* Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

Other Newsletters

- Description:* When project-specific newsletters are not used, articles may be prepared for publication in other newsletters produced by municipalities, homeowners' associations, church groups, civic groups, or others that may have an interest in the project. These articles are subject to the publication dates and space restrictions of the individual publishers.
- Activities:* 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 can be post cards, letters or fliers. 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 cyclists and pedestrians may be targeted for greenways 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.

TV Message Board Scripts

- Description:* Information about regular MPO, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Citizens Advisory Committee meetings, and other public meetings is provided to Manatee and Sarasota Government Access Television to be included in scrolling announcements. Government Access is provided to all cable customers in Sarasota and Manatee Counties as part of their standard cable services.
- Activities:* Regular meetings, project-specific meetings, workshops, open houses, public hearings and other MPO events or activities.

Project-specific Web Sites

- Description:* For individual projects, such as corridor studies, that are typically performed using consulting services, project-specific web sites are often used. In this case, a link to the project site is included on the MPO site. Project web sites can contain study area maps, meeting announcements, descriptions of potential alternatives, comment forms, user surveys and contact information for the project team
- Activities:* Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies and major MPO projects.

Project Workshops/Open Houses

Description: These are public meetings that are generally open and 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.

Activities: Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, project priority process, certification review, Long Range Transportation Plan and other major MPO activities.

Small Group Meetings/Focus Groups

Description: During projects such as planning studies, meetings are held with small groups that have an interest in the project. Meetings could be with homeowners or neighborhood associations, civic groups, special interest groups, or other groups of affected or interested parties.

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

E-mail Announcements

Description: Meeting announcements and MPO information will be e-mailed to interested persons that have submitted their e-mail addresses to MPO staff.

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

Fact Sheets

Description: Used to provide summary information regarding MPO policy, programs and projects. Fact sheets can be distributed at public meetings, on the MPO web site, and in public places such as libraries and community centers. Individuals and special interest groups can request fact sheets directly from the MPO staff office.

Activities: Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, project priorities process, Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, and other 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 should be used on all MPO publications, including those developed by consultants working on MPO sponsored projects.

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. Public Hearings are recorded and transcribed for the record.

Activities: Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, corridor studies, Project Development & Environment studies, other planning studies and 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 web site.

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. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns.

Activities: Corridor studies, small-area studies and other planning studies.

Government Access Television

Description: Both Sarasota County and Manatee County maintain a cable television network that is part of basic cable service within each county. In addition to rolling message scripts, Government Access Television also broadcasts regular and special meetings, both live and pre-recorded, as well as short informative programs about governmental activities or projects of interest to the entire population.

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

Posters and Fliers

Description: Posters and fliers 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 fliers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using direct mailings and/or newsletters.

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

APPENDIX A

COMMONLY USED TRANSPORTATION DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

COMMONLY USED TRANSPORTATION DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Federal law that requires public facilities (including transportation services) to be accessible to persons with disabilities including those with mental disabilities, temporary disabilities, and the conditions related to substance abuse.

ADT Average Daily Traffic

The number of vehicles passing a fixed point in a day, averaged over a number of days. The number of count days included in the average varies with the intended use of data.

AMPO Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

A national nonprofit membership organization serving the interests of metropolitan planning organizations nationwide.

AVO Average Vehicle Occupancy

The ratio of person trips to vehicle trips; often used as a criteria in judging the success of trip reduction programs.

AVR Average Vehicle Ridership

The number of employees scheduled to start work during specified hours divided by the number of vehicles arriving at the site during those same hours.

BMS Bridge Management Systems

Process for analyzing existing conditions and identifying future needs with respect to bridges; required for the National Highway System (NHS) as a part of Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991; and the extent to which the remaining public bridges are included in the process is left to the discretion of state and local officials.

CAA Clean Air Act Amendments

1990 amendments to the federal Clean Air Act which classify non-attainment areas and provide for rules dealing with air pollution in such areas; specifically brought transportation decisions into the context of air quality control.

CAC Citizen Advisory Committee

Advisory committee utilized by most metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) for citizen input into the transportation planning process.

CIA Community Impact Assessment

Community impact assessment is “a process to evaluate the effects of a transportation action on a community and its quality of life.” It is a way to incorporate community considerations into the

planning and development of major transportation projects. From a policy perspective, it is a process for assessing the social and economic impacts of transportation projects as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The assessment may address a variety of important community issues such as land development, aesthetics, mobility, neighborhood cohesion, safety, relocation, and economic impacts.

CIE Capital Improvements Element

A required element of local comprehensive plans which evaluates the need for public facilities, their cost and funding/schedule for construction; specific content for the CIE is found in Rule 9J-5.016 of the Florida Administrative Code and Chapter 163.3 177(3), Florida Statutes.

CMA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

A categorical funding program created under ISTEA which directs funding to projects that contribute to meeting national air quality standards in non-attainment areas for ozone and carbon monoxide.

CMP Congestion Management Process

The Congestion Management Process (CMP), which has evolved from what was previously known as the Congestion Management System (CMS), is defined as a systematic approach, collaboratively developed and implemented throughout a metropolitan region, that provides for the safe and effective management and operation of new and existing transportation facilities through the use of demand reduction and operational management strategies.

CMS Concurrency Management System

A systematic process utilized by local governments to ensure that new development does not occur unless adequate infrastructure (such as public facilities) is in place to support growth; requirements for the CMS are found in Rule 9J-5.0055, Florida Administrative Code.

CTCs Community Transportation Coordinators

People contracted by the Florida Transportation Disadvantaged Commission to provide complete, cost-effective and efficient transportation services to transportation disadvantaged (TD) persons.

CTD Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged was established by Florida Statute 427 to coordinate all transportation; using Federal, state or local funds, for people who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation due to disability, income status or age.

CUTR Center for Urban Transportation Research

A legislatively created research center, located at the University of South Florida, whose purpose is to conduct and facilitate research and serve as an information exchange on issues related to urban

transportation problems in Florida.

DCA Department of Community Affairs

State and land planning agency responsible for a number of local and regional planning of programs, established in Chapter 163 and 380 of the Florida Statutes.

DOT Department of Transportation

Agency responsible for transportation at the local, state, or federal level.

DRI Development of Regional Impact

A large-scale development which is required to undergo a local review process; the appropriate regional planning council coordinates the review; the appropriate local government makes the approval decision, with the Florida Department of Community Affairs retaining appeal authority; Rule 28-24, Florida Administrative Code identified types of development subject to Development of Regional Impact Review.

EAR Evaluation and Appraisal Report

Periodic review and evaluation of a local government comprehensive plan; generally due every 7 years; requirements for contents are identified in Rule 9J-5.0053, Florida Administrative Code and Chapter 163.3 191, Florida Statutes.

EIS Environmental Impact Statement

A document that explains the purpose and need for a project, presents project alternatives, analyzes the likely impact of each, explains the choice of a preferred alternative, and finally details measures to be taken in order to mitigate the impacts of the preferred alternative.

EPA Environmental Protection Agency

Federal agency that leads the nation's environmental science, research, education and assessment efforts. The mission of the Environmental Protection Agency is to protect human health and the environment

ETDM Efficient Transportation Decision Making

Florida's ETDM process defines the procedures for planning transportation projects, conducting environmental reviews, and developing and permitting projects.

FAA Federal Aviation Administration

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) oversees the safety of civil aviation. The safety mission of the FAA is first and foremost and includes the issuance and enforcement of regulations and

standards related to the manufacture, operation, certification and maintenance of aircraft. The agency is responsible for the rating and certification of airmen and for certification of airports serving air carriers. It also regulates a program to protect the security of civil aviation, and enforces regulations under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act for shipments by air. The FAA, which operates a network of airport towers, air route traffic control centers, and flight service stations, develops air traffic rules, allocates the use of airspace, and provides for the security control of air traffic to meet national defense requirements. Other responsibilities include the construction or installation of visual and electronic aids to air navigation and promotion of aviation safety internationally. The FAA, which regulates and encourages the U.S. commercial space transportation industry, also licenses commercial space launch facilities and private sector launches

FDOT Florida Department of Transportation

State agency responsible for transportation issues in Florida.

FHPP Federal High Priority Projects

Projects earmarked by Congress as high priorities at the federal level. This amounts to roughly 5% of the total transportation budget.

FHWA Federal Highway Administration

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) coordinates highway transportation programs in cooperation with states and other partners to enhance the country's safety, economic vitality, quality of life, and the environment. Major program areas include the Federal-Aid Highway Program, which provides federal financial assistance to the States to construct and improve the National Highway System, urban and rural roads, and bridges. This program provides funds for general improvements and development of safe highways and roads. The Federal Lands Highway Program provides access to and within national forests, national parks, Indian reservations and other public lands by preparing plans and contracts, supervising construction facilities, and conducting bridge inspections and surveys. The FHWA also manages a comprehensive research, development, and technology program.

FS Florida Statutes

Documents in which Florida's laws are found.

FSUTMS Florida Standard Urban Transportation Modeling Structure

Computer model used in Florida for transportation planning to simulate existing and future travel patterns; developed by Florida Department of Transportation for long-range urban area transportation modeling.

FTA Federal Transit Administration

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) assists in developing improved mass transportation systems for cities and communities nationwide. Through its grant programs, FTA helps plan, build, and operate transit systems with convenience, cost and accessibility in mind. While buses and rail vehicles are the most common type of public transportation, other kinds include commuter ferryboats,

trolleys, inclined railways, subways, and people movers. In providing financial, technical and planning assistance, the agency provides leadership and resources for safe and technologically advanced local transit systems while assisting in the development of local and regional traffic reduction. The FTA maintains the National Transit library (NTL), a repository of reports, documents, and data generated by professionals and others from around the country. The NTL is designed to facilitate document sharing among people interested in transit and transit related topics.

FTP Florida Transportation Plan

A statewide, comprehensive transportation plan which establishes long-range goals to be accomplished over a 20-25 year time frame; developed by Florida Department of Transportation; updated on an annual basis.

FY Fiscal Year

A budget year; runs from July 1 through June 30 for the State of Florida; and from October 1 through September 30 for the federal government.

HOV High Occupancy Vehicle

In Florida, vehicles carrying two (2) or more people receive this designation and may travel on freeways, expressways and other large volume roads in lanes designated for high occupancy vehicles.

ICE Intergovernment Coordination Element

Required element of a local government comprehensive plan addressing coordination between adjacent local governments, and regional and state agencies; requirements for content are found in Rule 9J-5.015, Florida Administrative Code and Chapter 163.3 177(b)(h), Florida Statutes.

IJR Interchange Justification Report

Document required by Federal Highway Administration prior to approval of the opening of a new interchange on an interstate facility.

ITE Institute of Transportation Engineers

An international society of professionals in Transportation and traffic engineering; publishes Trip Generation (a manual of trip generation rates by land use type).

ITS Intelligent Transportation System

Use of computer and communications technology to facilitate the flow of information between travelers and system operators to improve mobility and transportation productivity, enhance safety, maximize the use of existing transportation facilities, conserve energy resources and reduce adverse environmental effects; includes concepts such as “freeway management systems,” “automated fare collection” and “transit information kiosks.”

JPA Joint Participation Agreement

Legal instrument describing intergovernmental tasks to be accomplished and/or funds to be paid

between government agencies.

LCB Local Coordinating Board

Oversees the provision of Transportation Disadvantaged services

LOS Level of Service

A qualitative assessment of a road's operating condition, generally described using a scale of A (little congestion) to E/F (severe congestion).

LGCP Local Government Comprehensive Plan

As required by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, requires local governments to develop local comprehensive plans; also contains capital improvements, consistency and concurrency requirements, and provides for Rule Chapter 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code.

LRTP Long Range Transportation Plan

A 20-year forecast plan required of state planning agencies and MPOs; must consider a wide range of social, environmental, energy and economic factors in determining overall regional goals and consider how transportation can best meet these goals.

MCAT Manatee County Area Transit

Provider of public transportation services in Manatee County.

MG Minimum Guarantee

A funding category created in TEA-21 that guarantees a 90% return of contributions on formula funds to every state.

MPO Metropolitan Planning Organization

The forum for cooperative transportation decision making; required for urbanized areas with populations over 50,000.

MPOAC Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council

A statewide advisory council (consisting of one member from each MPO) that serves Florida's 26 MPOs as the principal forum for collective policy discussion; created by law to assist the MPOs in carrying out the urbanized area transportation planning process.

NHS National Highway System

Specific major roads to be designated by September 30, 1995; the NHS will consist of 155, 000 (plus or minus 15%) miles of road and represents one category of roads eligible for federal funds under ISTEA.

PD&E Project Development and Environment Study

Process developed to ensure that the design of transportation projects appropriately reflects and incorporates the unique engineering and community characteristics of an area and ensure that projects receiving Federal aid follow the policies and procedures outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act.

PMS Pavement Management System

A systematic process utilized by state agencies and MPOs to analyze and summarize pavement information for use in selecting and implementing cost-effective payment construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance programs; required for roads in the National Highway System as a part of ISTEA; the extent to which the remaining public roads are included in the process is left to the discretion of state and local officials; criteria found in 23 CFR 500.021-209.

PTMS Public Transportation Facilities and Equipment Management System

A systematic process (required under ISTEA) utilized by state agencies and MPOs to collect and analyze information on the condition and cost of transit assets on a continual basis; data is to be used to help people choose cost effective strategies for providing and keeping transit facilities and equipment in good condition; process must be developed in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs); the use of CMS in non-TMAs is left to the discretion of state and local officials.

ROW Right-of-Way

Real property that is used for transportation purposes; defines the extent of the corridor that can be used for the road and associated drainage.

RPC Regional Planning Council: Tampa Bay and Southwest Florida

A multipurpose organization composed of representatives of local governments and appointed representatives from the geographic area covered by the council, and designated as the primary organization to address problems and plan solutions that are of greater than local concern or scope; currently there are 11 regional planning councils in Florida. In some area of Florida the Regional Planning Council is under contract to provide staff services to MPOs.

SAFETEA-LU Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users.

Federal Transportation legislation passed in 2005 that provides funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$280 billion

SCAT Sarasota County Area Transit

Provider of public transportation services in Sarasota County.

SIB State Infrastructure Bank

Method of financing large capital projects by taking advantage of borrowing against future state

revenues.

SIS Strategic Intermodal System

The SIS is a Florida network of high-priority transportation facilities, including the state's largest and most significant commercial service airports, spaceport, deepwater seaports, freight rail terminals, passenger rail and intercity bus terminals, rail corridors, waterways and highways.

SRPP Strategic Regional Policy Plan

A plan developed by each Regional Planning Council (RPC), which contains goals and policies addressing affordable housing, economic development, emergency preparedness, natural resources of regional significance, and regional transportation issues; must be consistent with the state comprehensive plan.

STIP State Transportation Improvement Program

The FDOT Five Year Work Program as prescribed by federal law.

TAC Technical Advisory Committee

A standing committee of most metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs); function is to provide advice on plans or actions of the MPO from planners, engineers and other staff members (not general citizens).

TCSP Transportation and Community and Systems Preservation Pilot Program

A federal discretionary grant program created in TEA-21 that is designed to provide funding for revitalizing and rehabilitating transportation corridors.

TD Transportation Disadvantaged

People who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation due to disability, income status or age.

TDM Transportation (Travel) Demand Management

The application of strategies and policies to reduce automobile travel demand, or to redistribute this demand in space or in time.

TDP Transit Development Plan

The transit agency's vision for public transportation with an assessment of transit needs in the study area and the development of a staged implementation program to set priorities for improvements

TE Transportation Enhancements

Specific activities which can be funded with Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds; activities include pedestrian/bicycle facilities, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic historic sites, scenic

or historic highway programs, scenic beautification, historic preservation, rehabilitation/operation of historic transportation structures, railway corridor preservation, control/removal of outdoor advertising, archeological planning/research and mitigation of highway runoff water pollution.

TEA-21 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century

Federal Legislation authorizing funds for all modes of transportation and guidelines on the use of those funds. Successor to ISTEA, the land-mark legislation that clarified the role of the MPOs in the local priority setting process. TEA-21 emphasizes increased public involvement, simplicity, flexibility, fairness, and higher funding levels for transportation.

TIM Traffic Incident Management Team

The Traffic Incident Management Team is a local group of professionals from the transportation and public safety community committed to the effective implementation of local traffic incident management programs.

TIP Transportation Improvement Program

A priority list of transportation projects developed by a metropolitan planning organization that is to be carried out within the five (5) year period following its adoption; must include documentation of federal and state funding sources for each project and be consistent with adopted MPO long range transportation plans and local government comprehensive plans.

TMA Transportation Management Association

A membership organization designed to help a group of businesses, companies, and other interested parties implement a commute management program; some funding for these groups is available through the state Commuter Assistance Program (CAP).

TMA Transportation Management Area

An area designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation given to all urbanized areas with a population over 200,000 (or other area when requested by the Governor and MPO); these areas must comply with special transportation planning requirements regarding congestion management systems, project selection and certification; requirements identified in 23 CFR0 450.300-33.6.

TOD Transit Oriented Development

A mixed-use residential or commercial area designed to maximize access to public transport, often incorporating features to encourage transit ridership.

TSM Transportation Systems Management

Strategies to improve the efficiency of the transportation system through operational improvements such as the use of bus priority or reserved lanes, signalization, access management, turn restrictions, etc.

UPWP Unified Planning Work Program

Developed by Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs); identifies all transportation and transportation air quality tasks and activities anticipated within the next one to two years, including a schedule for the completion of the identified tasks and activities.

V/C Volume to Capacity Ratio

Mathematical comparison of the number of vehicles using a roadway in relation to that roadway's capacity.

VHT Vehicle Hours Traveled

Measure commonly used to indicate the amount of vehicle usage on a highway network.

VMT Vehicle Miles Traveled

Measure commonly used to indicate the amount of vehicle usage on a highway network.

Appendix B

Public Participation Plan Evaluation Guidebook

The Federal Highway Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation require the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of public participation activities. By continuously evaluating public participation activities, it is possible to improve or add new activities to the MPO program and to discontinue activities that are ineffective. The purpose of this guidebook is to provide guidelines for the evaluation of public participation techniques. The MPO's public participation policy is contained in the Public Participation Plan. The Public Participation Plan includes descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the MPO and other agencies in the public participation process. Also included in the Public Participation Plan are descriptions of various public participation techniques that could be used by the MPO. This guidebook describes the techniques, outlines the steps to be taken to evaluate those techniques, identifies measures to quantify success rates, and outlines strategies to improve the MPO's public participation process.

This guidebook is intended to be a "living" document, with additions and changes based on each evaluation that is performed. This guidebook should be reviewed at least every three years to ensure that appropriate changes are being implemented by the MPO.

EVALUATION METHODS AND PERFORMANCE GOALS

In order to determine the effectiveness of the public participation tools, they must be evaluated and compared to established performance goals. The typical methods for evaluating the effectiveness of public participation tools are surveys and quantitative statistical analysis. This section briefly describes evaluation methods used by the MPO. Performance goals and methods for meeting those goals have been identified for each public participation tool.

Surveys

Description: Surveys typically consist of short, specific questions regarding public participation tools that are ongoing or that were used on a specific project. Surveys can be conducted in person, by phone, mail or e-mail. Face-to-face and telephone surveys provide quick responses and can be used when a respondent's answer may lead to a follow-up question. For example, respondents may be asked if advertisements are an effective notification tool. If the response is no, the surveyor can ask the respondent why advertisements are not effective and also what other tools they would prefer. In person and telephone surveys can target specific areas or groups or can be random sampling. Mail surveys may be used to provide written record of respondents answers. Mail-back surveys can be distributed at meetings, inside other publications, or by mailing directly to potential respondents. Respondents can be a targeted group, such as members of special interest groups or residents of specific areas, or they can be randomly generated. Return postage for mail surveys can be pre-paid by the MPO, or be the responsibility of the respondent. E-mail surveys, like mail surveys, provide a written record of responses. Unlike mail-back surveys, there is little to no reproduction or distribution cost to the MPO to send out the surveys, and little to no cost to respondents to return a response. To use e-mail surveys, it is necessary to have e-mail addresses for the targeted respondents, and random distribution is not really an option.

Statistical Analysis

Statistics can be used to determine the "return on the investment" of producing public participation tools. For example, the number of persons attending an activity can be compared to the number of persons that were notified of the activity. This type of evaluation can be an indicator of whether or not the tools used for public participation are actually reaching the intended audience, or which tools had a greater response rate. Statistical analysis is used to evaluate survey responses and the results of the analysis are compared to the evaluation measures to determine the rate of success of public participation tools.

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

The MPO continually strives for improved public participation. Improvements should be made to increase public awareness and to improve the quantity and quality of information provided to the public. The decisions made by the MPO affect the entire population, both residents and visitors, of Sarasota and Manatee counties. Therefore, seeking public input on those decisions is vital to the success of the MPO as the agency responsible for transportation planning. As soon as possible when a public participation evaluation is performed, a list of improvement strategies should be identified for implementation. If improvement is needed for an ongoing public participation task, such as the MPO web site, a reasonable completion date should be established. If improvement is needed for one-time activities, such as corridor studies, the improvement should be implemented where appropriate on future activities.

Public Participation Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Methods to Meet Goal(s)
Public Participation Plan	N/A - PIP reflects the practices of the MPO	N/A	Update at least every 3 years
MPO Web Site	Number of hits	Minimum of 90 hits/ month, 5% increase in hits/ quarter.	Use other tools to increase advertisement of the site.
MPO Master Database	Number of returned items	Maximum of 2% return rate per mailing	Make immediate corrections when items are returned.
Legal Advertisements	N/A required by Florida Statutes	N/A	N/A
Quarterly Newsletter	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of returns	N/A. Return rate is addressed under MPO Master Database.	Correct as needed
Project Specific Open Houses/ Workshops	Calls, letters, etc.; Attendance	3% - 5% of affected population in attendance.	Schedule at convenient times and locations.
Direct Mailings	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons contacted	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/ survey respondents received the mailing	Increase/ Decrease mailing list to more accurately target affected areas.
Press Releases	Calls, letters, etc.	No standard. Format may be modified based on specific comments received.	Encourage publication of press releases by keeping the media informed.
TV Message Boards	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/ survey respondents saw the meeting notice.	Provide information to Government Access TV
E-mail Announcements/ Internet Message Boards	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 5% of meeting attendees/survey respondents saw the announcement.	Increase e-mail list

Public Participation Tools Evaluation – continued

Public Participation Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Methods to Meet Goal(s)
Government Access TV	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	15% of meeting attendees/ survey respondents the notice.	Provide information to Government Access TV
Fact Sheets	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Positive comments.	
MPO Logo	Calls, letters, etc.	Recognition of the logo	The MPO logo should be used on all MPO products and publications
Public Hearings	Calls, letters, etc.; Attendance	3% - 5% of affected population in attendance.	Schedule hearings at convenient times/locations.
Comment Forms	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of responses	60% of meeting attendees filled out a form	Encourage responses by explaining the importance
Surveys	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of responses	60% of contacted persons participate 20% of mail recipients return	Encourage responses. Explain importance feedback.

Public Participation Evaluation Form

<p>Evaluation of Activity: <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Study <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Tool (s) <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please specify</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>If this is a study evaluation, is this: <input type="checkbox"/> mid-study <input type="checkbox"/> end of study</p> <p>List the public participation tools used during the study:</p>
<p>Description of Study or Tool:</p>
<p>Audience(s) Targeted for Public Participation:</p>
<p>Type of Evaluation(s) to be conducted: <input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative <input type="checkbox"/> Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Statistical Analysis</p> <p>Survey, indicate type: <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Written <input type="checkbox"/> Mail-back</p> <p>Targeted Respondents:</p> <p>Statistical Analysis, description</p>
<p>Date Evaluation Began: _____ Date Completed: _____</p> <p>Completed By:</p>

Appendix C

Limited English Proficiency Plan

Limited English Proficiency Plan

The Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for an on-going, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process in Sarasota and Manatee counties. This planning process guides the use of federal and state dollars spent on existing and future transportation projects or programs, and the **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan** plays an integral role in that process. This document will detail the LEP Plan which was developed in conjunction with best practice standards for public participation.

Introduction

On August 11, 2000, President William J. Clinton signed **Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency**, to clarify Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Its purpose was to ensure accessibility to programs and services for 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, 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. It reads in part,

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.

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 other organizations. Title VI covers a recipient's entire program or activity. This means all components of a recipient's operations are covered. Simply put, any organization that receives federal financial assistance is required to follow this Executive Order.

The US Department of Transportation (DOT) published **Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Person** in the December 14, 2005 Federal Register. The guidance explicitly identifies MPO's as organizations that must follow this guidance:

*The 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. For*

example, if DOT provides assistance to a state department of transportation to rehabilitate a particular highway on the National Highway System, all of the operations of the entire state department of transportation—not just the particular highway program or project—are covered by the DOT guidance.

The intent of this **Limited English Proficiency Plan** is to ensure access to the planning process and information published by the MPO where it is determined that a substantial numbers of residents in Sarasota and Manatee counties do not speak or read English proficiently. The production of multilingual publications and documents and/or interpretation at meetings or events will be provided to the degree that funding permits based on current laws and regulations.

Laws and Policies Guiding Limited English Proficiency Plans

As part of Metropolitan Planning Organization certification by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the *LEP Plan* will be assessed and evaluated. The following matrix illustrates these laws, policies and considerations:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	Limited English Proficiency Executive Order 13166
Federal Law	Federal Policy
Enacted in 1964	Enacted in August 2000
Considers all persons	Considers eligible population
Contains monitoring and oversight compliance review requirements	Contains monitoring and oversight compliance review requirements
Factor criteria is required, no numerical or percentage thresholds	Factor criteria is required, no numerical or percentage thresholds
Provides protection on the basis of race, color, and national origin	Provides protection on the basis of national origin
Focuses on eliminating discrimination in federally funded programs	Focuses on providing LEP persons with meaningful access to services using four factor criteria
<i>Annual Accomplishment and Upcoming Goals Report</i> to FHWA	<i>Annual Accomplishment and Upcoming Goals Report</i> to FHWA

Who is an LEP individual?

As defined in the 2000 United States Census, it is any Individual who speaks a language at home other than English as their primary language, and who speak or understand English ‘not well’ or ‘not at all’.

Determining the need

As a recipient of federal funding, the MPO must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the information and services it provides. As noticed in the **Federal Register/ Volume 70, Number 239/ Wednesday, December 14, 2005/ Notices**, there are four factors to consider in determining “reasonable steps”.

- Factor 1. The number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service area;
- Factor 2. The frequency with which LEP persons encounter MPO programs;
- Factor 3. The importance of the service provided by MPO programs; and
- Factor 4. The resources available and overall cost to the MPO.

The DOT Policy Guidance gives recipients of federal funds substantial flexibility in determining what language assistance is appropriate based on a local assessment of the four factors listed above. The following is an assessment of need in Sarasota and Manatee counties in relation to the four factors and the transportation planning process.

LEP Assessment for the Sarasota/Manatee MPO

Factor 1. The Number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service area

The first step towards understanding the profile of individuals that could participate in the transportation planning process is a review of Census data. Tables 1 and 2 on the following pages display the primary language spoken and number of individuals that are LEP.

For our planning purposes, we are considering people that speak English ‘not well’ or ‘not at all’ and only the top four language groups are included in the analysis.

Table 1, on the following page, is derived from the 2000 US Census and shows the number and percent of persons who are age five (5) and older, with regard to their English language skills, for the cities and the unincorporated portions of the counties within the MPO area. As indicated, over two (2) percent of the entire MPO area population is not proficient in English. Palmetto has the greatest concentration of LEP persons – over eight (8) percent. In contrast, the cities of Anna Maria, Holmes Beach, Venice, and the Town of Longboat Key each have a relatively low concentration with less than one (1) percent LEP persons.

Table 1: Limited English Proficient Persons in the MPO Planning area and local jurisdictions			
Derived from Table 19 of Summary File 3 - 2000 Census of Population and Housing US Census Bureau			
Jurisdiction	Population 5 years and older	Number of LEP Persons	Percentage of LEP Persons
Anna Maria	1,776	3	0.17%
Bradenton	46,843	1,535	3.28%
Bradenton Beach	1,458	17	1.17%
Holmes Beach	4,833	42	0.87%
Palmetto	11,442	975	8.52%
Longboat Key	7,502	25	0.33%
North Port	21,377	469	2.19%
Sarasota	49,890	2,655	5.32%
Venice	17,604	33	0.19%
Unincorporated Manatee County	182,652	4,380	2.40%
Unincorporated Sarasota County	216,954	2,713	1.25%
MPO Area (includes all cities and unincorporated county)	562,331	12,786	2.27%

Table 2 shows the number and percent of LEP persons by language spoken at the individual’s home. Of the LEP persons within the MPO area, over seventy-five (75) percent speak Spanish at home, making this the most significant percentage of the area’s population. Over sixteen (16) percent speak an Indo-European language, like such as Urdu, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, French or German. More than five (5) percent speak Asian and Pacific Islander languages, such as Chinese, Korean and Japanese, with less than two (2) percent speaking “other” languages at home.

Table 2: Language Spoken at Home by LEP Persons - Sarasota Manatee MPO Planning Area				
Derived from Table 19 of Summary File 3 - 2000 Census of Population and Housing US Census Bureau				
	Spanish Language	Indo-European Languages	Asian & Pacific Islander Languages	Other Languages
LEP Persons				
5-17 years old	1,447	150	83	0
18-64 years old	7,720	1,115	535	125
65 and older	587	884	108	95
Total	9,754	2,149	726	220
Percent of all LEP Persons	75.91%	16.73%	5.65%	1.71%

Factor 2. The frequency in which LEP Persons encounter MPO programs

The small, but growing size of the LEP population in this region will likely increase the probability of future contact with the MPO. However, to date, no requests have been made by either individuals or groups directly to the MPO for Spanish or other language interpreters or publications.

Factor 3. The importance of the service provided by the MPO program

MPO programs use federal funds to plan for future transportation projects, and therefore do not include any direct service or program that requires vital, immediate or emergency assistance, such as medical treatment or services for basic needs (like food or shelter). Further, the MPO does not conduct required activities such as applications, interviews or other activities prior to participation in its programs or events. Involvement by any citizen with the MPO or its committees is voluntary.

However, the MPO must ensure that all segments of the population, including LEP persons, have been involved or have had the opportunity to be involved in the transportation planning process to be consistent with the goal of the Federal Environmental Justice program and policy.

The impact of proposed transportation investments on underserved and under-represented population groups is part of the evaluation process in use of federal funds in three major areas for the MPO:

- the biennial **Unified Planning Work Program**,
- the five year **Transportation Improvement Program**,
- the **Long Range Transportation Plan**, covering 25 years.

Inclusive public participation is a priority consideration in other MPO plans, studies and programs as well. The impacts of transportation improvements resulting from these planning activities have an impact on all residents. Understanding and continued involvement are encouraged throughout the process. The MPO is concerned with input from all stakeholders, and every effort is taken to make the planning process as inclusive as possible.

As a result of the long range transportation planning process, selected projects receive approval for federal funding and progress towards project planning and construction under the responsibility of local jurisdictions or state transportation agencies. These state and local organizations have their own policies to ensure LEP individuals can participate in the process that determines where, how and when a specific transportation project is implemented.

Factor 4. The resources available and overall MPO cost

Given the size of the LEP population in the MPO area and current financial constraints, full multi-language translations of large transportation plan documents and maps is not considered as warranted at this time. However, continued growth of the MPO area and its Spanish-speaking population makes offering Spanish translations a sound community investment.

As a result, the MPO intends to initiate a program to make the Executive Summaries for the **Long Range Transportation Plan**, the **Transportation Improvement Program**, the **Public Involvement Plan**, the **Citizens Guide to Civil Rights**, and other key documents available in Spanish. To accommodate the cost, these summaries may be presented in alternative formats, such as brochures or newsletters, which are designed to capture all of the significant points of the full document. The MPO

will continue efforts to collaborate with state and local agencies to provide language translation and interpretation services when practical and in consideration of the funding available. The translation of these documents will begin after the final English version has been completed. Spanish language outreach materials from organizations such as federal, state, and local transportation agencies will be used when possible. In addition, the MPO will make available Spanish translation of key elements of the MPO web site and will pursue other user-friendly multi-lingual software applications compatible with the web content management system currently used by the MPO.

MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS

Engaging the diverse population within the MPO area is important. The MPO is committed to providing quality services to all citizens, including those with limited english proficiency. Spanish is the most dominant language spoken by LEP individuals in this MPO's service area. All language access activities detailed below will be coordinated in collaboration with the MPO Board and staff.

Safe Harbor Stipulation

Federal law provides a 'safe harbor' stipulation so recipients of federal funding can ensure compliance with their obligation to provide written translations in languages other than English with greater certainty. A 'safe harbor' means that as long as a recipient (the MPO) has created a plan for the provision of written translations under a specific set of circumstances, such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with written translation obligations under Title VI.

However, failure to provide written translations under the circumstances does not mean there is noncompliance, but rather provides for recipients a guide for greater certainty of compliance in accordance with the four factor analysis.

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 persons, whichever is less of eligible persons served or likely to be affected. Translation can also be provided orally. The '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 reasonable to provide.

Providing Notice to LEP Persons

US DOT guidance indicates that once an agency has decided, based on the four factors, to provide language services, it is important that the recipient notify LEP persons of services available free of charge in a language the LEP persons would understand. Example methods for notification include:

1. Signage that indicates when free language assistance is available with advance notice;
2. Stating in outreach documents that language services are available;
3. Working with community-based organizations and other stakeholders to inform LEP individuals of MPO services and the availability of language assistance;
4. Using automated telephone voice mail or menu to provide information about available language assistance services;
5. Including notices in local newspapers in languages other than English;
6. Providing notices on non-English-language radio and television about MPO services and the availability of language assistance; and
7. Providing presentations and/or notices at schools and community based organizations (CBO).

The MPO will publicize the availability of Spanish interpreter services, free of charge, at least 7 days prior to MPO Board and committee meetings, workshops, forums or events which will be noticed on the MPO web site, in meeting notices (packets), and using the following additional tools as appropriate:

- Signage
- Public outreach materials
- Community-based organizations
- Local newspapers
- Cable Television Providers
- Sarasota and Manatee school and library systems

The MPO defines an interpreter as a person who translates spoken language orally, as opposed to a translator, who translates written language and transfers the meaning of written text from one language into another. The MPO will request language interpreter services from Manatee and Sarasota county staff as needed.

The MPO can notice meetings in newspapers that serves the Hispanic community throughout the Tampa Bay area, including Sarasota and Manatee counties. As covered under Title VI requirements for nondiscrimination, at each meeting, the MPO will provide Title VI material and include this material in an alternative language when applicable.

Language Assistance

As previously noted the MPO intends to initiate a program to make the Executive Summaries for key documents available in Spanish. Key documents include the **Long Range Transportation Plan**, the **Transportation Improvement Program**, the **Public Involvement Plan**, the **Citizens Guide to Civil Rights**.

A goal of the MPO **Public Participation Plan** is to provide user-friendly materials that will be appealing and easy to understand. The MPO may provide Executive Summaries in alternative formats, such as brochures or newsletters, depending on the work product.

MPO Staff Training

In order to establish meaningful access to information and services for LEP individuals, the MPO will properly train its employees to assist in person, and/or by telephone, LEP individuals who request assistance.

Appendix D

Title VI Civil Rights Policy and Procedures

Title VI Civil Rights Policy and Procedures

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. As a sub-recipient of the Florida Department of Transportation, the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has in place a Title VI complaint procedure.

1. Any person who believes that he or she, or any specific class of persons, has been subjected to discrimination or retaliation, by any MPO programs or activities, as prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and related statutes, may file a written complaint. All written complaints received by the MPO shall be referred immediately by the MPO Title VI Specialist, Michael L. Maholtz, to the District One Title VI Coordinator, for processing in accordance with approved State procedures.

Written complaints may be sent to:

Michael L. Maholtz, Transportation Planner
Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization
7632 15th Street East
Sarasota, Florida 34243

2. Verbal and non-written complaints received by the MPO shall be resolved informally by the MPO's Title VI Specialist. If the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved through informal means, or if at any time the complainant(s) requests to file a formal written complaint, the Complainant shall be referred immediately by the MPO Title VI Specialist to the FDOT's District One Title VI Coordinator for processing in accordance with approved State procedures.
3. The MPO Title VI Specialist will advise the FDOT's District One Title VI Coordinator within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the verbal and non-written allegations. The following information will be included in every notification to the FDOT's District One Title VI Coordinator:
 - (a) Name, address, and phone number of the Complainant.
 - (b) Name(s) and address(es) of the Respondent.
 - (c) Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, familial status or retaliation).
 - (d) Date of alleged discriminatory act(s).
 - (e) Date complaint received by the MPO.
 - (f) A statement of the complaint.
 - (g) Other agencies (state, local or Federal) where the complaint has been filed.
 - (h) An explanation of the actions the MPO has taken or proposed to resolve the allegation(s) in the complaint.

4. Within ten (10) calendar days, the MPO Title VI Specialist will acknowledge receipt of the

allegation(s), inform the Complainant of action taken or proposed action to process the allegation(s), and advise the Complainant of other avenues of redress available, such as the FDOT's Equal Opportunity Office (EOO).

5. Within sixty (60) calendar days, the MPO Title VI Specialist will conduct and complete a review of the verbal or non-written allegation(s) and based on the information obtained, will render a recommendation for action in a report of findings to the MPO Executive Director.
6. Within ninety (90) calendar days of the verbal or non-written allegation(s) receipt, MPO Executive Director will notify the Complainant in writing of the final decision reached, including the proposed disposition of the matter. The notification will advise the Complainant of his/her right to file a formal written complaint with the FDOT's EOO if they are dissatisfied with the final decision rendered by the MPO. The MPO's Title VI Specialist will also provide the FDOT's District One Title VI Coordinator with a copy of this decision and summary of findings.
7. The MPO's Title VI Specialist will maintain a log of all verbal and non-written complaints received by the MPO. The log will include the following information:
 - a. Name of Complainant.
 - b. Name of Respondent.
 - c. Basis of Complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, familial status or retaliation).
 - d. Date verbal or non-written complaint was received by the CCC.
 - e. Date MPO notified the FDOT's District One Title VI Coordinator of the verbal or non-written complaint.
 - f. Explanation of the actions the MPO has taken or proposed to resolve the issue raised in the complaint.

**PROGRAM AND RELATED STATUTES
DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT**

Name	Home Phone	Work Phone
Address (Street No., P.O. Box, Etc.)		City, State, Zip Code
Name of Person(s) Who Discriminated Against You, Position (if known), and Name of Agency:		
Address (Street No.)		City, State, Zip Code
Date of Alleged Incident:		
Discrimination Because Of: <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Retaliation <input type="checkbox"/> Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Familial Status <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> National Origin <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability		
Explain as briefly and clearly as possible on the back of this form what happened and how you were discriminated against. Indicate who was involved. Be sure to include how other persons were treated differently than you. Also attach any written material pertaining to your case.		

Signature _____

Date _____

Mail to: Michael Maholtz, Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization
7632 15th Street East, Sarasota, Florida 34243

Appendix E

A RESOLUTION OF THE SARASOTA/MANATEE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

ADOPTION OF THE SARASOTA/MANATEE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

RESOLUTION NO. 2009-05

**A RESOLUTION OF THE
SARASOTA/MANATEE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**ADOPTION OF THE SARASOTA/MANATEE
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization is the duly designated and constituted body responsible for carrying out the urban transportation planning and programming process for Sarasota and Manatee counties, the cities of Anna Maria, Bradenton, Bradenton Beach, Holmes Beach, North Port, Palmetto, Sarasota, and Venice, and the Town of Longboat Key, the Sarasota Manatee Airport Authority; and

WHEREAS, 23 U.S. Code 134; and 40 U.S. Code 1602(a)(2), 1603(a); and 1604(g)1 and (1); and Florida Statutes 339.175; require that the urbanized area, as a condition of the receipt of federal capital or operating assistance, have a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process that results in plans and programs consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the urbanized area; and

WHEREAS, the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization is required to actively encourage public participation in the planning process; and

WHEREAS, the existing Public Participation Plan is required to be updated to comply with the current Federal transportation legislation; the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) which authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SARASOTA/MANATEE MPO:

The Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization hereby adopts *Sarasota/Manatee Public Participation Plan* as its official process for Public Participation in the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization Planning Area.

The foregoing Resolution was offered and moved for adoption by _____.
The motion was seconded by _____, and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows: _____.

The Chairman of the MPO, thereupon declared the Resolution duly passed this 22nd day of June, 2009.

Signed:

Attested:

Nora Patterson, MPO Chair
Sarasota/Manatee MPO

Michael P. Howe, Executive Director
Sarasota/Manatee MPO