

# TPO 2016 Title VI Annual Report

In keeping in compliance with Title VI requirements as set forth in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this report serves as documentation of the activities carried out by the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO). Activities described herein were conducted from Sept. 2015 to Sept. 2016 by the MTPO staff and MTPO partners. These public participation and outreach techniques were performed as outlined in the MTPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP), which was updated in 2009.

## **Public meetings and advertising for MTPO sponsored projects and events**

Public meetings were conducted in accordance with the Public Participation Plan. Notices for these meetings were posted on the City website, in the official city newspaper, on the city's television station, and through invitation by direct mailing to socioeconomically disadvantaged, minority and disabled groups. Disadvantaged socioeconomic status as described by the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the purpose of distribution of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, are those individuals or families making less than 80% of the Area median income (Low-Mod. income). All Neighborhood Improvement Associations, by definition, meet this income qualification guideline. Therefore, for Environmental Justice and Title VI compliance purposes, all NIA's are targeted. This is achieved through correspondence with their respective NIA presidents, all of which are on our email distribution list. Other groups contacted include the Topeka Independent Living Resource Center, TMTA, Kansas Adapts, paratransit, and the NAACP.

This year, these public meeting were held for the creation of the Pedestrian Plan, the Wayfinding Study, and for the update of the Long Range Transportation Plan. In addition to MTPO/consultant planned meetings, for the Pedestrian input, the MTPO staff visited all 17 Neighborhood Improvement Associations (NIA's) in Topeka to garner input on sidewalk and intersection crossing needs in their respective neighborhoods. These visits and presentations were given during the regularly scheduled time for the respective NIA's.

A steering committee consisting of representatives from ADA, Paratransit, NAACP members, school districts, senior centers, elected officials and private citizens was also assembled and met several times throughout the development of the Pedestrian and Long Range Transportation Plan update processes.

## **Paratransit and Senior Transportation groups**

The MTPO staff attended Paratransit/Senior Transportation meetings, keeping these groups informed of the MTPO activities and the federal resources available to assist them. The MTPO tracks grant funds for operating and capital expenditures and posts them in the Transportation Improvement Program annually. The Senior Transportation groups include the LULLAC Senior Center; the Family Service and Guidance Center; the East Topeka Senior Center, and Pappan's Landing.

## **Bike Share Program**

MTPO partner Topeka Metro continued to promote the Bike-Share program, they launched last year, this year adding an additional 100 bikes to the fleet. This expansion added additional bike pickup and drop-off stations in all areas of the city, ensuring equal access all areas of the city.

## **Bus Shelter inventory and accessibility project**

The bus shelter inventory project continued this year. The MTPO transit staff worked with the city of Topeka and Topeka Metro, on this project which involves determining where permanent bus stops should be located along bus routes throughout the city. Topeka Metro also secured a grant that will fund ADA upgrading and for existing shelters as well as creating new ADA accessible shelters at newly designated locations. mapping the locations of current Bus shelters and benches and determining if they need to be upgraded and/or relocated as a means to better serve the bus riding community. Special emphasis was put on accessibility by non-ambulatory or otherwise impaired riders. This project included new features at bus shelters such as placing ramps and handrails at some of the shelters sites, features that had not been part of the design criteria in the past. In addition to meeting with commercial property owners, public meetings were held at locations where low-income and disabled residents were encouraged to attend and were a large part of the audience. They gave their input on where they would like to see new or improved accessibility bus shelters. By working with both Topeka Metro and the City of Topeka Public Works dept. the process was made easier. This is an on-going project that should be completed in 2015.

**Complete Streets Review.**

The MTPO staff has representation on the City of Topeka Complete Streets Review team. This team reviews all new roadway projects and ensures that adherence and compliance to the Complete Streets guidelines are followed when possible and feasible. This began in 2010 as a result of a Complete Streets Resolution which was created by the MTPO was adopted by the City of Topeka. Many of the projects are in EJ areas, as defined by the MTPO's Title VI Plan.

**Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods.**

MTPO staff now also participates in both the Heartland Healthy Neighborhood and Heartland Visioning meetings. These are monthly meetings which include persons with varying degrees of community involvement all working to one goal of bettering lives for all Topekans through improved Public health, multi-modal Transportation Alternatives, and offering a variety of lifestyle options. Participation on these committees keeps the MTPO staff abreast of current community initiatives, as well as lends a platform for the MTPO to solicit public input from various sources and perspectives.

**New MTPO Website**

The MTPO created a new website this more user-friendly and interactive then the previous website which was managed by the City of Topeka. Surveys and interactive website maps were used for both the Pedestrian and Long Range Transportation Plans.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carlton Scroggins AICP, MTPO Staff