

MTPO 2017 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. 2016 to Sept. 2017 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, and is currently being updated for 2017.

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, an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) organization; Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority (TMTA); Kansas American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT); local paratransit groups, and the NAACP.

This year, public meetings were held for the creation of the Long Range Transportation Plan, Futures 2040, In addition to special MTPO outreach contacts for sidewalk installations and bike path installations utilizing block grant funds throughout the NIA areas. MTPO staff alone with LRTP consultants visited NIA's and NA's in each quadrant of the City to ensure that all socio-economic populations had access and opportunity for input in the LRTP process.

Almost 1,000 individual responses via written and online surveys were received throughout the public participation planning process of the LRTP. This was by far the largest public response that the MTPO has garnered from any Transportation plan or endeavor. A larger contributor to the public involvement success of this plan was the MTPO use of its several social media platforms, including a Facebook page, Instagram, a LRTP website, a neighborhood specific online community (Nextdoor Neighbor) and a Twitter account.

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.

The MTPO staff also made regular visits to a newly recognized organization called the Justice Unity and Ministry Project (JUMP). This organization represented hundreds of individuals in Shawnee County with a large contingent of minority and elderly person with interests in transit and transportation. This group recognized the MTPO at their public meeting, for the "outstanding" public outreach efforts made during the development of Long Range Transportation Plan.

Bike Share Program and Bus Shelters

MTPO partner Topeka Metro utilized Transportation Alternatives grant funds to purchase bus shelters and bike share stations throughout the city, coordinating with the MTPO on emphasizing placements within the MTPO environmental Justice Areas.

Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods.

MTPO staff attends monthly meetings of the Heartland Healthy Neighborhood and Heartland Visioning meetings. These meetings are attended by persons representing various interests among the City including business, education, recreation, health and transportation. It provides a platform to espouse MTPO issues and in turn gives the MTPO an opportunity to gather opinions and concerns from a broad representation of the community. Many of the persons in these groups also serve on MTPO transportation committees.

MTPO Website

The MTPO as a “stand alone” site was created last year, and is constantly being updated and modified to provide easy access to all MTPO documents including the Title VI program and all Title VI forms. Surveys and interactive website maps were used for obtaining public information for the Long Range Transportation Plans.

Training/presentations

MTPO staff was invited to participate on a panel during a Bike/Ped Summit in Nebraska. This session focused on the production of the MTPO’s Pedestrian Master Plan and the extensive outreach that was achieved throughout the process. MTPO staff also Attended Title VI themed conference sessions at during the National American Planning Association (APA) and the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP).

Respectfully Submitted,

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