

MTPO 2019 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. 2018 to Sept. 2019 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 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, the NAACP, and Topeka Justice Unity and Ministry Project (JUMP).

This year, public meetings were held for the creation of the Long Range Transit Plan, and the Update of the Bikeways Master Plan, providing supporting information to Topeka residents, Board of Directors, the City council, Neighborhood Improvement Associations, and Senior Centers. Neighborhood meetings were also utilized for phase three of the Bikeways Master Plan implementation (8th Street project). In addition to special MTPO outreach contacts for bus stop locations, sidewalk installations and bike path installations utilizing block grant and Transportation Alternative funds throughout the City, including within NIA areas. The MTPO staff and partners, also participated in neighborhood public meetings with consultants pertaining to TIP projects for the modification of 12th and Huntoon streets.

The Meetings and Participants

For the recently initiated Bikeways Master Plan update, several unique stakeholders meetings were held which included persons with ties to the following organizations; Topeka Metro, Paratransit providers, Parks & Rec. Shawnee County Health Agency, local school districts, Washburn University, Topeka Independent Living Inc. ,ADA, Jayhawk Aging, AARP, Senior Council, United Way, Boys and Girls Club, Neighborhood Improvement Associations, Local Bicycle clubs, Topeka Police Dept, Sheriff's Dept., Fire Dept. EMTs, and several representative of the local business community including young entrepreneurs and the Topeka Chamber of Commerce. In addition to these stakeholder meetings, the MTPO staff also solicited information on the Bikeways Master Plan update at public events such as the First Fridays event in North Topeka, and the Downtown weekend Food Truck Festival. An onsite Public meeting was also held at the Shawnee County Health Agency, following the August Complete Streets Advisory Committee meeting. In addition to public meetings at different locations within the city, online surveys and interactive maps were also posted, and advertised through citywide email, press releases and social media (Facebook, Instagram and Nextdoor Neighbor applications)

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 and Bus Shelters

MTPO partner Topeka Metro utilized Transportation Alternatives grant funds to purchase bus shelters and bike share stations throughout the city. Prioritizing locations with consideration given to placements within the MTPO environmental Justice Areas.

Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods(HHN)

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. In 2018 the MTPO along with HHN, began organizing future new applications for Safe-Routes-To-School Grants, as well as implementation of the current phase II on the Quincy Elementary School SRTS application.

Training/presentations

MTPO staff attended the regional APA conference, as well as Seminars for the Regional Economic Model Inc. (REMI), a program utilized for performing model forecasts. The MTPO also staff also gave presentations to the City Council and other city departments. MTPO staff also sponsored events for Bicycle month (MAY) with included a public bicycle ride with the Mayor, Police officers and other city officials.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carlton Scroggins AICP, MTPO Manager