# Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization

## **Public Participation Plan**



Prepared April 2020 Adopted July 2020











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## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

## **Public Participation Plan**

Title 23, CFR 450.316 are the federal regulations detailing the responsibilities of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) for facilitating and informing the public on transportation planning activities in their metropolitan area. These rules are the guiding force behind the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization's Public Participation Plan.

Public involvement is the backbone of the transportation planning process for the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization. By engaging Acadiana residents at the earliest stages of project development, the MPO can ensure that the transportation facilities receiving federal funding reflect the community's priorities for mobility. The MPO is dedicated to setting up a public engagement process that reaches across all community boundaries, including race, income, abilities, and other socio-economic barriers to facilitate a transportation system that is equitable and accessible to all.













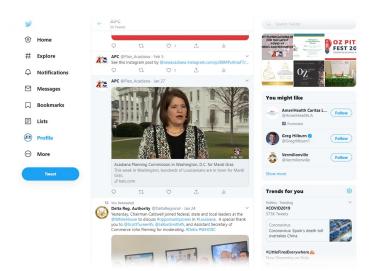






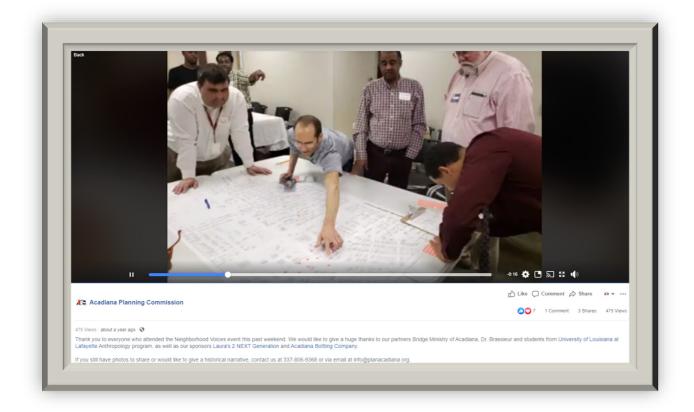








With advances in technology from mobile hardware to social media, the ease of targeting engagement across a wide spectrum of residents is unprecedented in planning history. The MPO aims to utilize new media and technologies to gauge public perception of transportation modes, projects, and visions. By incorporating virtual public engagement techniques, the MPO will be able to take the planning process out of the closed door, board room environment and into the hands of the entire Acadiana region.















## Purpose of Public Engagement

- Solicit the vision of residents on the transportation systems in their region for incorporation in short and long range transportation planning
- Allow transportation users to provide on the ground input into the operations of their streets and transit systems
- engagement tools for addressing a wide range of community members early in the planning process for incorporation of public input into projects before unknown public concerns develop to delay project delivery





















# About the Acadiana MPO

The Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization is the designated MPO for the Lafayette Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Metropolitan Study Area is spread over six parishes and 15 municipalities. The MPO Is housed within the Acadiana Planning Commission, the regional planning commission for the 7 parish Acadiana region.

Table 1: Population of Acadiana MPO by Jurisdiction

LINE No.	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	PARISH	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	2010 POF
1	ACADIA PARISH	ACADIA	POLICE JURY	2,428
2	IBERIA PARISH	IBERIA	HOME RULE	28,864
3	LAFAYETTE PARISH	LAFAYETTE	HOME RULE	67,574
4	ST LANDRY PARISH	ST. LANDRY	HOME RULE	3,362
5	ST MARTIN PARISH	ST. MARTIN	HOME RULE	24,611
6	VERMILION PARISH	VERMILION	POLICE JURY	3,887
7	Subtotal Unincorporated Areas			130,726
8	BREAUX BRIDGE	ST. MARTIN	CITY	8,139
9	BROUSSARD	LAFAYETTE	CITY	8,197
10	CARENCRO	LAFAYETTE	CITY	7,526
11	DUSON	LAFAYETTE	TOWN	1,716
12	GRAND COTEAU	ST. LANDRY	VILLAGE	947
13	HENDERSON	ST. MARTIN	TOWN	1,674
14	LAFAYETTE	LAFAYETTE	CITY	120,623
15	LOREAUVILLE	IBERIA	VILLAGE	887
16	MAURICE	VERMILION	VILLAGE	964
17	NEW IBERIA	IBERIA	CITY	30,617
18	PARKS	IBERIA	VILLAGE	653
19	SCOTT	LAFAYETTE	CITY	8,614
20	ST MARTINVILLE	ST. MARTIN	CITY	6,114
21	SUNSET	ST. LANDRY	TOWN	2,897
22	YOUNGSVILLE	LAFAYETTE	CITY	8,105
23	Subtotal Municipalities			207,673

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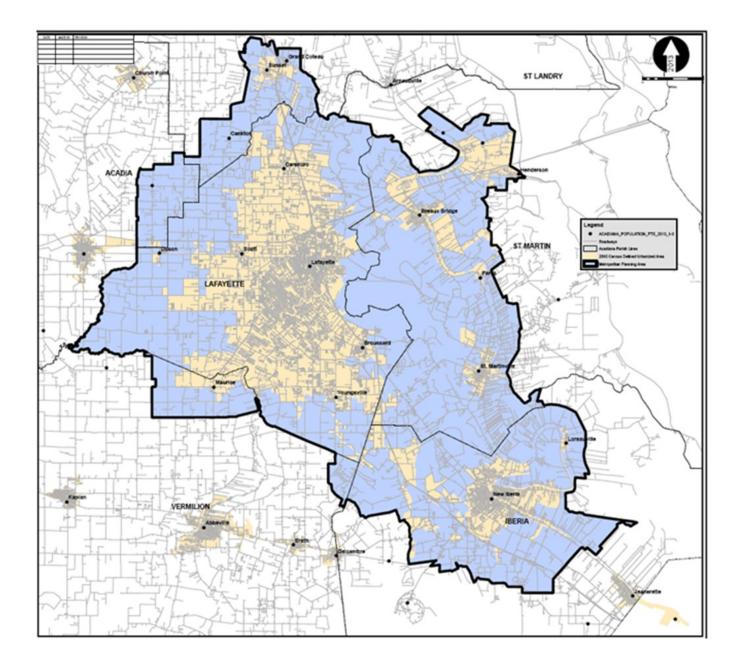








Map 1: Acadiana MPO Area and Jurisdictions

















## LOUISIANA MEETING LAWS

## **Public Participation Plan**

Louisiana has specific laws defining meetings of public bodies, meeting notice requirements, and the operation and decision-making process of public bodies. The Acadiana MPO Committee meetings are subject to Louisiana's Open Meeting Law, requiring full and open disclosure of the Committee's deliberations and decisions.

### What is a meeting?

- A meeting is a convening of a quorum of a public body to deliberate or act on a matter that the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power over.
- A meeting is also a convening of a quorum of a public body by the public body or a public official to receive information regarding a matter that the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power over.
- If a gathering consists of a quorum of the body or a meeting of a committee of the body to conduct any business of the body, the gathering should be presumed to be a meeting and, thus, subject to the requirements of the Open Meetings Law.

### What is a quorum?

- The Attorney General in Louisiana has published an opinion that a public body cannot in its by-laws define a quorum as less than a majority of the total members.
- If there is no statutorily defined quorum for the body, the body's quorum must be a simple majority, or half the membership plus one. This is the definition that the MPO utilizes to define committee quorum.

Source: https://app.lla.state.la.us/llala.nsf/



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## **Meeting Requirements** For the MPO Committees

- ⇒ Place a copy of the meeting notice at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at the location where the meeting will take place and publish on the official website of the body.
  - The MPO places the meeting agenda on the public entryway of the meeting location and the door to the meeting room. In terms of digital access, the MPO publishes the meeting notice in the official journal of record for the MPO and posts the agenda on the website and in a Google Calendar at least a week in advance of the meeting.
- ⇒ Allow for public comment.
  - The MPO Committees have adopted reasonable rules and procedures for allowing public comment at all meetings, in accordance with Robert's Rules of
- ⇒ Allow for recording of the meeting by the audience and record minutes of the proceedings.
  - The MPO records all meetings in a digital file for public distribution upon request.
- ⇒ Have "open" meetings observable to the public with an opportunity for public participation. Public bodies may not close their meetings to the public absent narrowly defined exceptions.
  - ♦ The MPO Committees' Policy and Procedures does not allow for closed door meetings and as such does not plan to hold such meetings.
- ⇒ A copy of the Open Meetings Law must also be posted at the location of the meeting.
  - ♦ The MPO Meeting Room has a copy posted at all times.
- ⇒ The MPO Committees adopt a regular meeting schedule at the final meetings of the year.















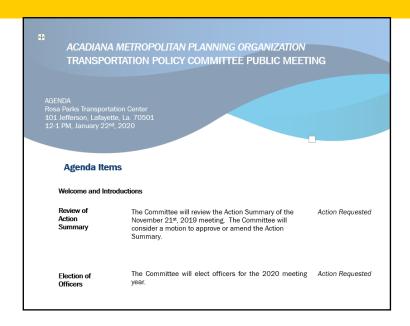
## Agenda and Minutes Regulations

• Notices must include date, time, and place of meeting, as well as an attached agenda.

This information is included in all agendas for the MPO, and the agenda serves as the official notice for the MPO.

- Committees are required to keep written minutes of all of their open meetings. These minutes must include the following:
  - The date, time, and place of the meeting
  - The members of the public body noted as either present or absent
  - The substance of all matters decided and a record, by individual member, of any votes taken
  - the minutes must be posted on the website of the pubic body for at least three months after the posting.

The MPO complies with all regulations regarding the recordation and distribution of meeting minutes.

























## **HOW CAN MEMBERS VOTE?**

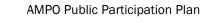
Committee members must vote viva voce, or by voice. The MPO Committees' voting procedures require the chairman to call for a vote of the motion on the floor. The chairman asks for all members who agree with the motion to say Aye and then all members who oppose the motion to say Nay. Individual votes are recorded and reflected in the minutes.

Louisiana law prohibits proxy voting and secret ballots. Members must be present for their vote to be counted. Votes cannot be submitted in writing or through a telephone.





















## COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

## **Public Participation Plan**

The Acadiana MPO has two primary committees, the Transportation Technical Committee and the Transportation Policy Committee. The two subcommittees provide guidance and specialized advisory skills to the primary committees, the Bike Facility Subcommittee and the Project Evaluation Subcommittee. The primary committee meetings are held every other month and the subcommittees on an as-needed basis. All meetings are held at the Rosa Parks Transportation Center, a multi-modal center that is a centrally located transit hub for the region. APC employee Rose Breaux serves as the official Meeting Facilitator for the MPO's committees.

















# TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

LCG - Jessica Cornay, Capital Projects

LCG - Neil Lebouef, Development Manager

LCG - Warren Abadie, TRB Director

Scott - Anna Doucet, Consultant Engineer

Youngsville - Pamela Granger, Consultant Engineer

Carencro - Luke Hebert, Consultant Engineer

St. Martinville - Jerry Trumps, Consultant Engineer

St. Landry Parish - Karl Aucoin, Consultant Engineer

Acadia Parish - Michael Schexnider, Roads

Supervisor

Breaux Bridge - Chris Richard, Consultant Engineer
Broussard - Ben Theriot, Code Enforcement
St. Martin Parish - Kasey Courville, PW Director
Iberia Parish - Joe Williams, PW Staff
Iberia Parish - Dexter Miguez, PW Director
Lafayette Airport - Steven Picou, Airport Director
ULL Transportation - Stuart Glaeser, Director
Bike and Pedestrian Engineer - Lucius Broussard,
Consulting Engineer
Transit - Terry Hurd, Lafayette Transit System

Planner

DOTD District 03 - Steve Draughon, Assistant Engineer Administrator

 $\label{eq:def-DotD} \mbox{DoTD Planning - Dawn Sholmire, Statewide Planning}$   $\mbox{Engineer}$ 

FHWA - Carlos McCloud, Planner
FTA - Casey Lewis, DOTD Program Manager



The Transportation Technical Committee serves as the Technical Advisory Committee for the MPO. The committee is comprised of 21 local government representatives and one FHWA ex-officio member. The committee provides technical guidance and expertise on the MPO's plans and project development and programming.















## **TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

### Acadia Parish

Vacant

### Lafayette Consolidated Government

Josh Guillory - Mayor-President Nanette Cook - City Council Member Andy Naquin - City Council Member A B Rubin - Parish Council Member Kevin Naquin - Parish Council Member Patrick Lewis - City Council Member Brett Mellington - City Council Rep. Patrick Trahan - City Council Rep. Kevin Normand - City Council Rep. Roddy Bergeron - City Council Rep.

### St. Landry Parish

Jessie Bellard - Interim Parish President

### St. Martin Parish

Calder Hebert - CAO Kasey Courville - PW Director

### Vermilion Parish

Keith Roy - Police Jury Administrator

### **Breaux Bridge**

Ricky Calais - Mayor

### Broussard

Ben Theriot - Code Enforcement

### City of New Iberia

Jane Braud - Planning and Zoning Director Vincent Palumbo - PW Director

Don Chauvin - City Manager

### St. Martinville

Craig Prosper - Council Member

Doyle Boudreaux - Council Member

### Youngsville

Clint Simoneaux - Director of Planning

### Iberia Parish

Larry Richard - Parish President Scott Saunier - CAO

### DOTD District 03

Michael DeSelles - District Administrator

### Transit Representative

Michael Mitchell - Parking and Transit Admin.

### Federal Highway Administration

Planner Carlos McCloud The Transportation Policy Committee serves as the Governing Board for the MPO. The committee is comprised of 24 local government representatives appointed by the highest elected official of the member entities and one FHWA ex-officio member. The committee holds the final say on all plans, projects, and programs for the MPO.





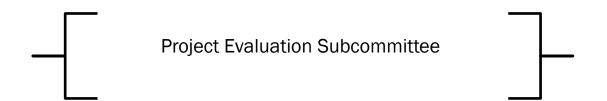






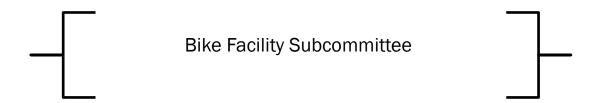






The Project Evaluation Subcommittee is built from members from both the Technical and Policy Committees. The subcommittee structure provides a crucial step in the Transportation Improvement Program's project selection process. The members review and rank the projects submitted from the local entities for Urban Systems funding.





The Bike Facility Subcommittee meets on an as-needed basis to promote the development of bicycle transportation facilities through the Acadiana MPO region. The subcommittee was initially formed for the development of the 2040 Bike Plan for the MPO and continues to provide guidance to the MPO Committees on the incorporation of bike facilities into the region's transportation infrastructure.



























Sara Gary Transportation Director

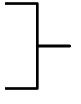




Rose Breaux Meeting Facilitator



Ron Czajkowski Safety Coordinator





Ashley Moran Planner II



Keefe P. Carney
Transportation Planner



Julie Yin

Transportation Modeler







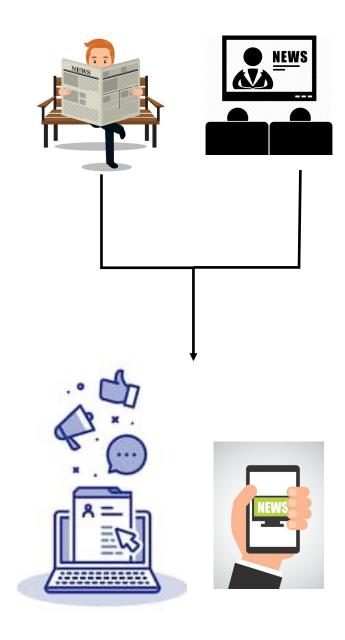


## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

## **Public Participation Plan**

The Public Participation Plan for the Acadiana MPO was most recently updated in 2015, following the MPO"s move from Lafayette Consolidated Government to the Acadiana Planning Commission. In the past 5 years since the plan was developed, there has been a significant shift in the ways the American public receives their information on government functions and actions. Social media and digital communications have revolutionized the public information process, and even traditional media such as television stations and print news have utilized the new media avenues to amplify their stories.

The 2020 Public Participation Plan represents this new paradigm in the public input and decision-making process. The MPO will incorporate these strategies to reach residents in the Acadiana area with the communication devices and tools that are the most common and have the widest reach.















## PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

## **Public Participation Plan**

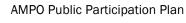
Federal legislation outlines the requirement for public comment procedures for Metropolitan Planning Organizations' planning documents. A spreadsheet is utilized to track the dates of the public comment periods and adoption of the planning documents by the Policy Committee. The chart below details the new public comment process for the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization:

Planning Document	Federal Regulations	Public Comment Time Period	Development Time Period
Metropolitan	"Reasonable	14 Days	Five Years
Transportation Plan	opportunity"		
and Amendments to			
Plan			
Transportation	"Reasonable	14 Days	Four Years
Improvement	opportunity"		
Program			
Transportation	"Reasonable	14 Days	Ongoing
Improvement	opportunity"		
Program Full			
Amendments			
Unified Planning	"Reasonable	14 Days	Annually
Work Program	opportunity"		
Public Participation	45 Days	45 Days	Ten Years or As Needed
Plan			

















The Unified Planning Work Program is the annual statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within the Acadiana metropolitan planning area. It includes a description of the planning work and resulting products, the staff who will perform the work, time frame for completing the work, the cost of the work, and the source of funds. The UPWP governs work programs for the expenditure of Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration planning funds.

Upon review by the Transportation Technical Committee of the draft Unified Planning Work Program, the public comment process will start by posting and providing a form for public comment on the Acadiana MPO website and social media page and distributing a copy of the Unified Planning Work Program and public comment forms at the main library branch in every member parish of the MPO.

After the public comment process is closed, the comments will be compiled and provided to the Transportation Policy Committee prior to the Policy Committee meeting where the document will be voted on. If the Policy Committee makes substantial changes to the Unified Planning Work Program, the public comment process will start again.















The Transportation Improvement Program is a staged intermodal program of transportation projects consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan. It is a regional component of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and contains transportation funding sources.

Upon review and consideration of the of the Transportation Improvement Program by the Transportation Technical Committee, the public comment process will start by posting and providing a form for public comment on the Acadiana MPO website and social media page and distributing a copy of the Transportation Improvement Program and public comment forms at the main library branch in every member parish of the MPO. The visualization aspect of this document will be provided on the website and with the library packet in addition to the display at the public meetings.

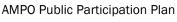
After the public comment process is closed, comments will be compiled and provided to the Transportation Policy Committee prior to the Policy Committee meeting where the document will be voted on. If the Policy Committee makes substantial changes to the Transportation Improvement Program, the public comment process will start again.

















## Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

As projects go through the development process, plans and funding sources change and new funding sources are periodically provided. The Transportation Improvement Program is developed on a four year cycle, so amendments to the program outside of this time frame must be adopted by the Acadiana MPO. There are two types of amendments: administrative modifications and full amendments.

Full amendments require full public comment and are presented with visualization elements at the TTC and TPC meetings for public comment and committee action to make the amendments to the TIP.

Modifications to the TIP, while not required to have the same public approval process, are also presented to the committees in the same way as the full amendments. This allows for committee members and the public to provide input on the modifications and their impact to the public's communities. In one recent example, a committee member was concerned about a modification demonstrating major issues with project delivery on an important safety improvement to his area. The committee member passed a resolution of expressing this concern and appealing to the safety benefits of the project. This action resulted in DOTD resolving the project delivery issues and moving the project forward in a timely manner.































## Amendment or Modification?

Administrative Modification	Amendment	
Revision of a project description that does not significantly change the project design concept and/or scope	Major changes to a project including the addition or deletion of a project	
Minor changes to project/project phase cost; applies to feasibility, environmental, R/W, utility relocation, engineering, construction  • Funding changes are limited to \$1,250,000 for projects for S \$5,000,000  • For projects> \$5,000,000 an administrative modification is classified as a change of less than 25% in funding	Major changes on project cost, project/ project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope  • Funding changes that are greater than \$1,250,000 for projects greater less than or equal to \$5,000,000 • Change of 25% or more in funding	
Minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects that does not affect fiscal constraint	Major changes to funding sources, such as adding a new federal funding source for a project not previously funding with federal funding.	
Minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates as long as the project stays within the approved S/TIP timeframe and does not affect fiscal constraint. 23 CFR 450.330(a)		
A change in the project implementing agency;		
A split or combination of individually listed projects; as long as cost, schedule, and scope remain unchanged;		
The addition or deletion of projects from grouped project (line item) listings as long as the total funding amounts stay within the guidelines in number two above.		

Source: Federal Highway Administration Louisiana Division Letter: "Approval of Procedures to Amend or Administratively Modify the Louisiana STIP and TIPs" dated November 1st, 2018.

















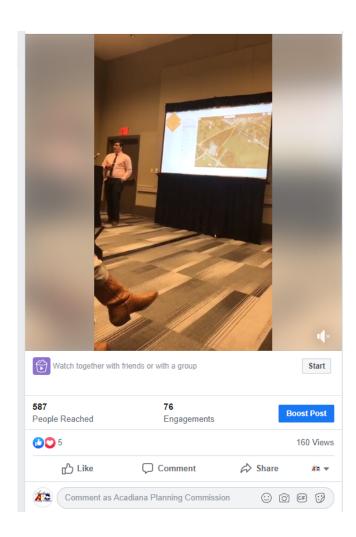


## SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

## **Public Participation Plan**

Social media has replaced traditional media outlets as the way Americans receive their news and information. As of 2019, it is estimated that 79% of Americans have a social media profile that utilize for staying informed on developments in their communities. Even as early as 2015, the Pew Research Center documented that a majority of all generation groups received most of their news from Facebook, the largest social media platform in the world.

The Acadiana Planning Commission, the MPO's host agency, has a Facebook page, a Twitter account, an Linked-In account, and a YouTube account that the MPO can utilize for sharing information about it's activities. This page will keep area residents informed on MPO plans and projects, public hearings, and presentations at conferences by MPO staff.



Source: https://www.journalism.org/2015/06/01/facebook-top-source-for-political-news-among-millennials/)



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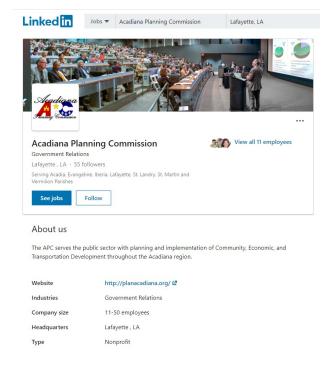






The Acadiana Planning Commission's
Facebook, Twitter, and Linked-In accounts
allow the MPO to connect with other federal,
state, and local agencies to coordinate
messaging for projects and programs. By
coordinating the messaging across multiple
platforms and organization's social media, the
information is amplified and reaches a wider
range of the public than through single posts
by the APC.

Multiple social media platforms ensure that the MPO provides an equitable message to the community. For example, African Americans and Hispanic Americans utilize the Twitter platform at a higher rate than White Americans. Reaching across platforms and sharing messaging with partner agencies casts the widest net for ensuring communication to all groups in the area.



Source: https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/













## VIRTUAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

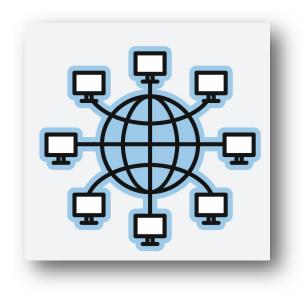
## **Public Participation Plan**

As part of the 5th Every Day Counts Initiative, the Federal Highway Administration is encouraging state, local, and regional governments to incorporate virtual public involvement as part of their public participation outreach efforts. As cell phone ownership and personal computers become a fundamental part of daily American life, online strategies for communication become vital for informing and educating local communities on government initiatives.

FHWA defines four benefits of the Virtual Public Involvement:

- Efficiency and Low Cost. Virtual tools and platforms can efficiently be made accessible to communities, many at a lower cost than traditional public engagement methods.
- Accelerated Project Delivery. Robust public engagement helps identify issues early in the project planning process, which reduces the need to revisit decisions.
- Communication and Collaboration. Virtual public involvement can aid in establishing a common vision for transportation and ensure the opinions and needs of the public are understood and considered during transportation planning and project development.
- Expanded Engagement. Virtual tools include stakeholders who do not participate in traditional approaches to public involvement. Greater engagement can improve project quality.

The MPO will utilize tools to increase virtual public participation and bring the greater online community into the MPO process.



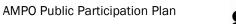


Source: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc\_5/virtual\_public\_involvement.cfm



















## TOOLS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## **Public Participation Plan**

The Acadiana MPO will utilize virtual public engagement tools into its planning and project development process in three ways:







## Streaming Public Meetings

The MPO will utilize public information software to stream public meetings. The software will allow for screened comments and targeted data gathering, as well as translation services of comments in languages other than English and phone in capabilities for the meetings. The meetings will be integrated into the MPO

# Storymaps for Plan Project Development

The MPO will develop Storymap components for its plans to allow community members the opportunity to immerse themselves in the plan's data and objectives. Storymaps provide an easily accessible path into the planning process by weaving visualization elements into the plan or project's narrative. Each one can easily be integrated into the MPO's page for the plan as well as shared on social media.

## Text and Social Media Survey Tools

The MPO is working with public involvement software to develop text message and social media survey tools to target communities where specific projects and plans are being developed. Creating a space for public engagement to happen from the comfort of one's home will allow the MPO to gather a wide range of public input and leave no one behind in the project and plan development process.



social media platforms.















## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

## **Public Participation Plan**

The MPO allows for public comment on all agenda items at its meetings. The public participant is requested to write the comment on a comment card and the card is submitted to the Committee Chair. Before each vote, the Chair calls for the public comment. The comment cards are kept for record keeping purposes and the comments are documented in the meeting minutes.

On virtual platforms, the MPO will utilize public meeting software to allow for people participating virtually to use a chat pod to write the comment. The Committee Chair will be able to read the submitted comment to the committee. The comment will be documented in the meeting minutes in the same way as a physical comment card.

For plans undergoing public comment, the plans are distributed to all of the main libraries for the parish governments in the MPO area. The libraries print the plans for display and, in some cases, post the plans on the library website. The libraries collect the comments from the public, and the MPO Meeting Facilitator contacts the libraries after the public comment period ends to collect the public comments. Libraries were chosen as the main avenue for public comment due to their role as community centers and repositories of local information.











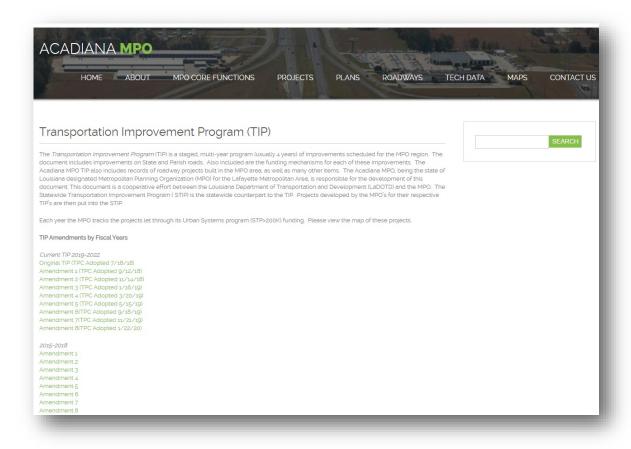






The MPO posts all plans online with the date of the posting, along with links to the previous iterations of the plans. This allows the public to get a full view of the MPO's activities and progress over time. It provides a venue for the public to access the documents at any time and from any place. The MPO also posts all meeting notices online in three locations: on an event page for the website, on a Google Calendar embedded in the website that users can easily sync to their home computer or mobile device, and on the front page of the MPO's website. Included in all meeting notices are the meeting agenda and the previous meeting's minutes.

Visualization of the MPO plans is included whenever possible when the plans are distributed. To assist with increasing access to the visualization elements, the MPO developing a web-based interactive visualization tool of the Transportation Improvement Program and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

























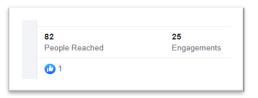




## **EVALUATION**

## **Public Participation Plan**







Public participation can be measured in several metrics. Documenting attendance at MPO meetings, including virtual meetings, is the simplest way to measure engagement. This allows the MPO to see who is attending the meetings and in what capacity—business owner, community resident, or professional interests. All sign in sheets from the MPO meetings are scanned and placed in the meeting folder to document attendance.

Social media also allows for measuring engagement through "Likes", "Re-tweets", "Shares", and more. Every social media post comes with a dashboard to document the reach of the post.

Virtual meeting software can collect email addresses, phone numbers, and other electronic communication forms for the MPO Meeting Facilitator to document how many residents are participating via computer, phone, or smart phone.

Source: NIC, www.egov.com



















# Appendix













