

# 2019 Public Participation Plan

MetroPlan Orlando  
250 S. Orange Ave., Suite 200  
Orlando, FL 32801  
(407) 481-5672

[MetroPlanOrlando.org](http://MetroPlanOrlando.org)

<mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.org>

Facebook: [@MetroPlan Orlando](https://www.facebook.com/MetroPlanOrlando)

Twitter: [@MetroPlan\\_Orl](https://twitter.com/MetroPlan_Orl)

**This reflects the projected schedule for approval.**

**Public Comment Period:** July 26, 2019 – September 10, 2019

**Adoption by MetroPlan Orlando Board:** September 11, 2019

**This is a draft document for comment. The final document will contain additional graphic information and illustrations that are not included in this draft plan. The approved plan will be posted on [MetroPlanOrlando.org](http://MetroPlanOrlando.org)**

## What is MetroPlan Orlando?

### WE'RE A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP

MetroPlan Orlando is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. MPOs were created under federal law to direct urban transportation planning and the allocation of federal and state funds. As a regional transportation planning agency, MetroPlan Orlando provides a forum for local elected officials, transportation experts, and members of the community to work together to improve mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors.

## What Can You Find in This Plan Document?

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## What Do We Do & How Do We Do It?

OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE CENTRAL FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION BETTER

MetroPlan Orlando provides leadership in transportation planning by engaging the public and fostering effective partnerships, throughout Central Florida. We aim to help create a transportation system that safely and efficiently moves people and goods through various transportation options. We partner with other governments and agencies to support a region that is livable, inviting to tourists, and attractive to diverse business interests.

To find out how you can get involved with regional transportation planning or to get more information about MetroPlan Orlando, please contact:

Community Outreach Strategist  
MetroPlan Orlando  
250 S. Orange Ave., Suite 200  
Orlando, FL 32801  
(407) 481-5672, ext. 305  
<mailto:Info@MetroPlanOrlando.org>

[MetroPlanOrlando.org](http://MetroPlanOrlando.org)

## How Can You Find Out More?

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Twitter: [@MetroPlan\\_Orl](https://twitter.com/MetroPlan_Orl)

## Why Do We Have a Public Participation Plan?

### BECAUSE YOU DESERVE A VOICE IN SHAPING CENTRAL FLORIDA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

MetroPlan Orlando recognizes that inclusive public involvement is essential to the planning process, improving decision-making, strengthening community partnerships and providing traditionally underserved populations with opportunities to learn about and influence the ways transportation affects their lives.

This plan includes objectives, strategies and measurement tools for the organization's public participation program. By directing its efforts through this structure, MetroPlan Orlando provides a proactive approach to education and input in the planning process and uses visualization techniques to ensure content is clear, concise, and easy to understand. The organization also relies on its website, MetroPlanOrlando.org, to provide easy access to information – including (but not limited to) activities, plans, and upcoming meetings.

### How Does the Public Participation Plan Get Approved?

#### HERE ARE THE STEPS

To ensure all interested persons in Central Florida have the opportunity to offer input, MetroPlan Orlando provides a 45-day public comment period, during which the draft Public Participation Plan is available on our website and in print. An email notification of the comment period is sent to a database of people interested in transportation in the region. The draft plan is distributed in print and electronically to board and committee members for review.

The public feedback may be used to make changes to the plan before it is approved. Once the feedback is incorporated and the plan is approved by the MetroPlan Orlando Board, it is posted in the Plans and the Community Outreach sections of MetroPlanOrlando.org. Those persons who want a printed copy of either the draft or approved plan may request it by calling the **Community Outreach Strategist at 407-481-5672, ext. 305.**

## **What Are the Goals for Public Participation?**

WE HAVE 2 BROAD GOALS THAT GUIDE US

MetroPlan Orlando invites community participants to define the region's needs and priorities and helps them find ways to be part of the solution to these issues. We seek broad diversity of thought in setting priorities for the three-county area – especially among people who have not been represented adequately in the past.

These overall goals for public participation guide MetroPlan Orlando in establishing consistent, effective community outreach practices. They also help the region's residents know what to expect from their metropolitan planning organization.

The goals of the MetroPlan Orlando Public Participation Plan are to:

- Encourage two-way communication with the community by informing members of the public about relevant transportation issues and ensuring they have a voice in the transportation planning process.
- Continuously reach out to and get input from people in the region who are not easily engaged because of age, ability, language, lack of financial resources, lack of access to technology, or other reasons.

These goals will be realized through several techniques, discussed later in this document

## What If You Aren't Familiar with All the Terms? THESE COMMON DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS CAN HELP

Sometimes it seems like transportation planning has its own language. Here are some terms that you may encounter:

**ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act:** A federal law that requires public facilities (including transportation services) to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

**FDOT – Florida Department of Transportation:** This state agency oversees transportation for the state and is divided into districts. MetroPlan Orlando's region is contained in the 9-county District 5.

**LEP – Limited English Proficiency:** Refers to a person who is not fluent in the English language. MetroPlan Orlando ensures individuals with limited English skills can participate in the transportation planning process through our Title VI Program: Nondiscrimination & Language Plan.

**TITLE VI –** The portion of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that says no person in the U.S. can be excluded from programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

**MTP – Metropolitan Transportation Plan:** 20-year forecast plan required of metropolitan planning organizations to consider a range of factors in determining regional goals and how transportation can best meet these goals.

**TIP – Transportation Improvement Program:** Sets the schedule for improvements to the region's transportation system over the next five years.

For more terms often-used in transportation planning, see MetroPlan Orlando's [electronic acronym guide](#), available here on our website.

## How Can You Participate in Transportation Planning?

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GET INVOLVED; CHOOSE WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

**Learn about Transportation.** All MetroPlan Orlando Board and committee meetings are open to the public. We also sometimes hold public meetings to discuss certain plans or particular projects. The organization has a comprehensive [calendar](#) with upcoming meetings, events, and workshops on the website. The calendar is updated continuously and will reflect the latest information – including meetings that may have been scheduled on short notice or to address an emergency situation.

**Let us know if you need help to participate.** MetroPlan Orlando will make special accommodations at no cost for persons with disabilities or persons requiring alternative language services who desire to participate in a MetroPlan Orlando event. People wanting to arrange for accommodations should call (407) 481-5672 at least three business days prior to the event.

**Voice your opinion.** Every meeting has time set aside for public comments, and staff members can assist with the procedure for speaking during those times. When we have significant plan changes or are introducing new projects, we have extended public comment periods, during which we receive comments for several days after the public meeting has adjourned. Find out more about how to comment at [MetroPlanOrlando.org](http://MetroPlanOrlando.org).

**If you cannot attend our meetings, we'll come to yours.** MetroPlan Orlando staff will make presentations, on request, for any group wanting more information about the region's transportation system. There is an online form to [request a speaker here on the website](#). This information is also available by mail, email or phone: 250 S. Orange Ave., Suite 200, Orlando, FL 32801 / [info@metroplanorlando.org](mailto:info@metroplanorlando.org) / (407) 481-5672, ext. 305.

**Subscribe to our electronic newsletter.** MetroPlan Orlando distributes an email update on activities and transportation events several times a year. This email is available to anyone, and an automatic sign-up is provided on the homepage of [MetroPlanOrlando.org](http://MetroPlanOrlando.org). We also take email sign-ups at community events.

**Follow us on social media.** We are active on Facebook (@MetroPlanOrlando), Twitter (@MetroPlan\_Orl) and YouTube (MetroPlan Orlando).

**We have some official roles for the public.** There are a limited number of volunteer seats on some of our advisory committees that are open to members of the public. These are publicized on [MetroPlanOrlando.org](http://MetroPlanOrlando.org) as they come available, and require an application and selection process. For more information, email: [Info@metroplanorlando.org](mailto:Info@metroplanorlando.org)

## **Who Takes Part in Our Process?**

### **BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERS, TRANSPORTATION PARTNERS & YOU**

The public is vital to the planning process, as described by federal law. That means one of the first people to the table when transportation planning is discussed should be YOU.

In addition, our board and committee structure is set up to serve the best interests of regional planning by offering a steady stream of input to decision-makers from many points of view. Here's how it works:

#### **MetroPlan Orlando Board**

The MetroPlan Orlando Board meets throughout the year to discuss issues and make decisions about future transportation projects, initiatives and improvements – providing leadership for a continuous, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process. The board is ultimately responsible for implementing transportation plans in the three-county area.

**WHO'S ON THE BOARD?** Elected officials from Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties and from the largest cities in the region hold seats, along with representatives from area transportation operating agencies. The board includes 20 voting members and six non-voting advisors. Non-voting advisors include a liaison from the Florida Department of Transportation, a representative from the Kissimmee Gateway Airport, and the chairpersons of each MetroPlan Orlando advisory committee – except for the Municipal Advisory Committee, which has a voting seat.

All board meetings are advertised in several ways, including being electronically published on the organization's website and being posted at the MetroPlan Orlando office. Each of the board's formal agendas includes two public comment periods – one prior to action items and one near the conclusion of the meeting.

**MEETINGS:** The MetroPlan Orlando Board generally meets on the second Wednesday of the month. Meetings begin at 9 a.m. in the MetroPlan Orlando Board Room, 250 S. Orange Ave., Suite 200, Orlando, FL 32801. All meetings are open to the public, and your participation is encouraged. The agenda is available online at <https://metroplanorlando.org/calendar/category/metroplan-orlando-board/list/>

*NOTE: The board may not meet every month. Dates and times may change due to holidays or other conflicts.*

## MetroPlan Orlando Board Make-Up

The make-up of the board, as designated by the Governor of Florida and by Interlocal Agreement, includes these voting members:

- Orange County (6)
- Osceola County (1)
- Seminole County (2)
- City of Altamonte Springs (1)
- City of Apopka (1)
- City of Kissimmee (1)
- City of Orlando (2)
- City of Sanford (1)
- Central Florida Expressway Authority (1)
- LYNX/SunRail (1)
- Greater Orlando Aviation Authority (1)
- Sanford Airport Authority (1)
- MetroPlan Orlando Municipal Advisory Committee (1)

### Non-voting advisors represent:

Florida Department of Transportation

Kissimmee Gateway Airport

MetroPlan Orlando advisory committees (other than the Municipal Advisory Committee):  
Community Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Transportation Systems  
Management & Operations Advisory Committee.

## Committee Input to the Board

Throughout the planning process, the MetroPlan Orlando Board receives input and recommendations from its advisory groups.

Committees meet regularly and provide reports, via the chairperson, during a standard agenda item at MetroPlan Orlando Board meetings. This reporting mechanism provides a greater level of assurance that board decisions are technically sound and that they have considered such things as public input, impacts on smaller municipalities, and the needs of all transportation system users. All state Government in the Sunshine requirements regarding public access to government meetings and records are part of the committee structure.

### About Committees

Committees may not meet every month. Dates and times may change due to holidays or other conflicts. Committee meetings usually take place in the MetroPlan Orlando Board Room, 250 S. Orange Ave., Suite 200, Orlando, FL 32801. They are open to the public, and your participation is encouraged. Agendas are available online at [MetroPlanOrlando.org](http://MetroPlanOrlando.org) under Upcoming Events & Agendas.

## Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee ensures the public has the opportunity to review and evaluate all proposed transportation policies, plans and programs. About half the Community Advisory Committee members are appointed by local governments, and the other half by the MetroPlan Orlando Board.

WHO'S ON THE COMMITTEE? Membership includes multimodal transportation advocates, representatives from underserved communities and business interests. This composition encourages diversity of many kinds, including geographic, demographic, and modal.

The Community Advisory Committee is the main standing advisory committee for which citizens can volunteer. Residents interested in serving on the committee in a MetroPlan Orlando appointed seat will need to fill out an application, which is made available online when vacancies occur. Applications are also available by request from our office. For more information, contact MetroPlan Orlando at (407) 481-5672 or email [info@metroplanorlando.org](mailto:info@metroplanorlando.org).

MEETINGS: The committee generally meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

## Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee reviews and evaluates all transportation policies, plans and programs from a technical perspective. The committee makes recommendations to the board, based on these technical considerations, providing an additional perspective to the board prior to decision-making.

**WHO'S ON THE COMMITTEE?** This group is composed of transportation planners and engineers appointed by local governments and the region's transportation operating agencies.

**MEETINGS:** The Technical Advisory Committee generally meets on the fourth Friday of the month, beginning at 10 a.m.

### **Transportation Systems Management & Operations Advisory Committee**

The Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO) Advisory Committee explores how technology and relatively low-cost improvements can make the most of the existing transportation system. In addition, the committee establishes measures to help improve traffic reliability and safety in Central Florida.

**WHO'S ON THE COMMITTEE?** This group includes planning and engineering experts from federal, state, regional and local agencies. More than 30 jurisdictions are represented by voting or non-voting members. The committee also includes a non-voting Citizen Advocate. Residents interested in serving on the committee as Citizen Advocate will need to fill out an application, which is made available online when the seat needs to be filled. Applications are also available by request from our office. For more information, contact MetroPlan Orlando at (407) 481-5672 or email [info@metroplanorlando.org](mailto:info@metroplanorlando.org).

**MEETINGS:** The Transportation Systems Management & Operations Advisory Committee generally meets on the fourth Friday of the month, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

### **Municipal Advisory Committee**

Due to the limited number of seats on the MetroPlan Orlando Board, only the most populated cities in the three-county area are directly represented on the board. Created by MetroPlan Orlando in 2001, the Municipal Advisory Committee has a vote on the board and ensures smaller cities are represented in decision-making. Statewide, the Municipal Advisory Committee is unique to MetroPlan Orlando.

**WHO'S ON THE COMMITTEE?** Input comes from mayors and council members of 15 cities and towns not directly represented on the board.

**MEETINGS:** The Municipal Advisory Committee generally meets on the Thursday prior to the MetroPlan Orlando Board meeting, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

### **Other Advisory Groups**

The MetroPlan Orlando Board also receives input from several other groups, representing a variety of interests including freight, environmental concerns and land use. These groups are formed as needed and may not remain as permanent parts of the MetroPlan Orlando committee structure.

### **Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board**

As the designated planning agency for the region, MetroPlan Orlando provides staff support to the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB). This board coordinates

transportation needs of the disadvantaged in our community, including individuals with physical and economic challenges and senior citizens facing mobility issues. The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board reviews price and service levels, safety concerns, eligibility and other pertinent issues related to the ACCESS LYNX paratransit service in the three-county area.

WHO'S ON THE TDLCB? From time to time, seats are available on the TDLCB, which may be limited to certain types of applicants – such as paratransit system users, senior citizens, etc. Interested persons who qualify for these seats will need to fill out an application, which is made available online when vacancies occur. Applications are also available by request from our office. For more information, contact MetroPlan Orlando at (407) 481-5672 or email [info@metroplanorlando.org](mailto:info@metroplanorlando.org).

MEETINGS: The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board meets on the second Thursday of February, May, August, and November, beginning at 10 a.m.

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## **What Are MetroPlan Orlando's Core Plans?**

Metropolitan planning organizations, such as MetroPlan Orlando, are charged in federal law with developing three specific plans: 1) Metropolitan Transportation Plan, 2) Transportation Improvement Program, and 3) Unified Planning Work Program. MetroPlan Orlando also produces a Prioritized Project List, which serves to connect the priorities of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan with those of the Transportation Improvement Program, as required by state law.

For each plan, the outreach process includes: making plan documents available throughout the review process by the MetroPlan Orlando Board and advisory committees; identifying meetings where the plan will appear on the agenda; and inviting public comment, both at meetings and through separate means. All board and committee meetings include opportunities for the public to speak on the plans before they are considered for a vote. Meetings are properly advertised, according to Florida's Government in the Sunshine guidelines.

In addition, citizens unable to attend committee or board meetings are encouraged to submit written comments via postal service, MetroPlanOrlando.org contact form, or email.

The most prominent tools for sharing information and plan documents will be digital, but paper copies are available on request to 407-481-5672, ext. 305.

Here is a closer look at each plan, along with checklists for involving the public.

### **Metropolitan Transportation Plan**

This plan, previously known as the Long Range Transportation Plan or LRTP, identifies transportation improvements up to at least 20 years in the future. It lays out what is necessary to maintain adequate mobility and to accommodate growth forecasted in the coming decades. The plan is developed, in part, through a comprehensive analysis of highway, public transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and freight movement needs. Public policy considerations and public input also guide development of the plan.

#### **Metropolitan Transportation Plan Outreach Checklist**

- Official 45-day public comment period for independent Metropolitan Transportation Plan Public Participation draft plan documents on MetroPlanOrlando.org
- Board approves Public Participation Plan; staff executes the outreach plan
- Draft plan reviewed by MetroPlan Orlando advisory committees
- Public notice is distributed electronically
- Social media posts help bring attention to draft plan
- Ample opportunities for public comment throughout, including a process for submitting written public comments
- Provide summary of public comments to the board before it takes action
- Board vote on plan adoption with public comment period at the meeting
- Publication of adopted plan on MetroPlanOrlando.org

## Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendments & Modifications

Changes to the long range plan are occasionally needed. These may be deemed either “amendments,” or “administrative modifications,” according to the Florida Department of Transportation MPO Handbook.

An **amendment** is a revision to the plan that involves a major change, such as making a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope.

An **administrative modification** is a minor revision to the plan that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects, or minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. An administrative modification does not require public review and comment.

### Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment Outreach Checklist

- Proposed amendment published on MetroPlanOrlando.org
- Review by the MPO advisory committees
- Ample opportunities provided for public input throughout, including a process for submitting written comments
- Social media posts help bring attention to draft plan
- Amendment revised, as needed, based on public input, which is shared with the board
- Board vote on approval
- Approved amendment published on MetroPlanOrlando.org

## Prioritized Project List

Once projects are included in the long range plan, they need to be prioritized as they await funding. MetroPlan Orlando's formal process for prioritizing projects results in a Prioritized Project List (PPL), which is reviewed annually by the board. This list uses a series of performance-based federal and local criteria to prioritize the projects, including such evaluation measures as safety, air quality, environmental justice, and accessibility.

### Prioritized Project List Outreach Checklist

- Draft list published on MetroPlanOrlando.org
- Draft list presented at MPO advisory committee meetings
- Ample opportunities provided for public input throughout, including a process for submitting written comments
- Social media posts help bring attention to draft plan
- Board vote on approval
- Approved Prioritized Project List published on MetroPlanOrlando.org

## Transportation Improvement Program

This five-year plan assigns available funding to specific projects. MetroPlan Orlando develops a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) each year, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

### Transportation Improvement Program Outreach Checklist

- Draft project information published on MetroPlanOrlando.org in advance of committee review
- Draft plan presented at MPO advisory committee meetings
- Ample opportunities provided for public input throughout, including a process for submitting written comments
- Social media posts help bring attention to draft plan
- Provide summary of public comments to the board before it takes action
- Board vote on approval after public comment period
- Approved Transportation Improvement Program published on MetroPlanOrlando.org

## Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program

Most amendments to the TIP receive a review (as outlined in the checklist that follows) before becoming part of the plan and being published on MetroPlanOrlando.org.

Exceptions are made when an **emergency amendment** must be approved prior to the next board meeting for the amended project to receive funding. Then, the MetroPlan Orlando Board chair is

authorized to approve the amendment and sign the corresponding resolution on behalf of the board without calling an emergency meeting. The chair's approval of the amendment then must be provided to advisory committees as an information item and ratified at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

#### **Transportation Improvement Program Non-Emergency Amendment Outreach Checklist**

- Proposed amendment published on MetroPlanOrlando.org in advance of committee review
- Amendment reviewed by MPO advisory committees
- Ample opportunities provided for public input throughout, including a process for submitting written comments
- Social media posts help bring attention to draft plan
- Board vote on approval, following public comment period
- Approved Transportation Improvement Program amendment becomes part of Transportation Improvement Program published on MetroPlanOrlando.org

#### **Unified Planning Work Program**

This plan provides a work program for MetroPlan Orlando, including the transportation planning budget and related activities for the metropolitan area. It is also the organization's official budget document. Though the document covers a two-year period, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is reviewed yearly to refine previously identified tasks and better reflect changes in the economic climate.

#### **UPWP Outreach Checklist**

- Draft UPWP published on MetroPlanOrlando.org in advance of committee review
- Draft UPWP presented at MPO advisory committee meetings
- Board vote on approval
- Approved UPWP published on MetroPlanOrlando.org

## How Will We Meet Our Goals?

### THERE IS A SYSTEM FOR EVALUATING PROGRESS IN KEY AREAS

All our public participation activities at MetroPlan Orlando are focused on establishing a comprehensive and inclusive process through various methods, and creating continuous opportunities to engage the public in transportation planning. Public outreach occurs in person and online in activities organized by MetroPlan Orlando, as well as in response to public requests.

Most of the suggested strategies and tools listed below are currently used by the organization, but the focus is being sharpened in this plan to mesh with the revamped 2019 goals for public participation.

Following are two broad goals that we will use to guide our public participation performance. Each of these is then realized through a series of objectives, strategies, and tools that can be measured to evaluate our performance.

#### Goal 1

*Encourage two-way communication with the community by informing members of the public about relevant transportation issues and ensuring they have a voice in the transportation planning process.*

##### Objectives that support Goal 1:

**A.** Plan or take part in least **2 outreach events per month**, making sure to include traditionally underserved populations in the region – senior citizens, economically disadvantaged, physically disabled, young people, and people with limited proficiency in English.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS: a) Use targeted meetings, partnerships and other methods to foster meaningful participation by a broad range of participants; b) Leverage partnerships with transportation agencies, local governments, and interested parties to broaden outreach geographically across the region and reach transit riders, pedestrians, and cyclists; c) Distribute information, as needed, in Spanish as well as English to help establish ties with Spanish-speaking communities; d) Maintain active speakers bureau to inform interested community groups about transportation planning and provide easily accessible information on how to request speakers via telephone, email or website signup ([Metroplanorlando.org/community-outreach/request-a-speaker](http://Metroplanorlando.org/community-outreach/request-a-speaker)); e) Develop ways to interact with the public at events and presentations, such as surveys and video comments; f) Provide periodic presentations to board and committee members, working groups, and partners on outreach activities and feedback received from the public.

**B.** Publish and distribute broadly and continuously **easy-to-read and visually appealing materials that use plain language to inform the public** about significant accomplishments, key issues, upcoming events, and participation opportunities relating to the work of MetroPlan Orlando and transportation planning in general.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS: a) Distribute printed products, such as annual reports, brochures, and project-specific reports that provide accessible information, summarize accomplishments, and outline key issues; b) Develop digital products, such as the organization website, electronic newsletters, and videos that maximize visualization and interaction to make outreach more effective; c) Develop targeted media materials for print, broadcast and online outlets

to help in reporting stories related to transportation planning by providing facts and context; d) Provide information (text, photos, videos) about upcoming and past outreach activities as fact sheets, reports, website posts, electronic newsletter articles, and social media posts.

**C.** Develop and use an outreach program appropriate for Central Florida students, with an emphasis on planning a future transportation system.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS: a) Use original or adapted programs that promote transportation planning in schools or for school-aged groups and/or their leaders or teachers; b) Distribute age-appropriate materials that explain fundamental ideas related to the transportation system at school and community events.

**D.** Meet all federal and state requirements for public involvement by having successful certifications annually by the Florida Department of Transportation and every four years by the U.S Department of Transportation.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS: a) Review information from the FDOT Handbook for MPOs, Florida's Government in the Sunshine guidelines, guidance from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, and other sources.

### **Measurement of Results for Goal 1:**

The measurement of success for this goal will be to increase average outreach output at least 2% for these areas yearly over the base year (2018), with documented engagement, as outlined below:

- Use of plain language, as defined by the Federal Plain Language Guide
- Outreach events/ speakers bureau presentations
- Promotional and informative materials content review
- Digital outreach, using Google Analytics and eblast statistics to track website visitors and electronic news recipients
- Social Media postings (maintain average 5.5% engagement, via social media monitor)
- Youth and school-focused programs
- Media coverage review
- Certification by the Florida Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration.

**Goal 2:** *Continuously reach out to and get input from people in the region who are not easily engaged because of age, ability, language, lack of financial resources, lack of access to technology, or other reasons.*

### **Objectives that support Goal 2:**

**A.** Develop ways to provide outreach for traditionally underserved populations in the region, using environmental justice focus areas. The focus areas, included in our [Nondiscrimination and Language Plan](#), were established by layering regional maps of disadvantaged populations and identifying the areas with the highest concentrations of people who meet those criteria. These groups include

senior citizens, economically disadvantaged, racial minorities, people with disabilities, young people, and people with limited proficiency in English.

**SUGGESTED STRATEGIES/TOOLS:** a) Conduct targeted meetings or attend events that occur within the environmental justice map boundaries; b) Develop non-traditional partnerships that help foster meaningful participation among groups whose voices are not regularly heard in the transportation planning process; c) Distribute outreach materials in languages other than English, when needed, to reach a broad audience; d) Maintain a robust outreach program for young people with specific activities geared toward building their interest in transportation planning; e) Provide materials in hard copy when needed for those without online access.

**Measurement of Results for Goal 2:**

The measurement of success for this goal will be to provide documentation of the following:

- Target at least 30% of outreach events to get participation from underserved populations
- Explore new outreach tools for getting participation from hard-to-reach or underserved groups

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## **What Are the Requirements for Public Participation?**

### **METROPLAN ORLANDO COMPLIES WITH STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS**

The procedures for community engagement are determined by the rules and regulations set forth in federal legislation and policy. Particulars of the federal guidance are cited in this section and are included in the Appendix. But community engagement is more than just a requirement. It is a critical element of our planning process.

MetroPlan Orlando welcomes advice, suggestions and ideas about regional issues from interested citizens and groups. There are many opportunities and levels of involvement for citizens related to public policy development. We encourage citizens to be involved throughout the decision-making process, including at local government levels where early stages of policy formation often occur.

The MetroPlan Orlando Public Participation Plan is developed in consultation with all interested parties, identifying procedures, strategies, desired outcomes, and evaluation tools related to:

- Providing adequate notice of public participation activities;
- Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
- Using visualization techniques;
- Making public information available on MetroPlanOrlando.org;
- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received;
- Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by the existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households;
- Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final plan differs significantly from the version made available for public comment;
- Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes;
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

The MetroPlan Orlando public participation process is continuing, cooperative and comprehensive.

#### **Laws Governing Public Participation**

As part of the planning process, federal law (§450.316, Code of Federal Regulation), and state law (Section 286, Florida statutes) both require public involvement to ensure that various parties - the individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and others – are given reasonable opportunities to comment.

## **How Do We Reach Underserved Communities?**

### A NONDISCRIMINATION & LANGUAGE PLAN LAYS OUT A PROCESS

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is organized to work in concert with the organization's Title VI Nondiscrimination & Language Plan. This plan is posted under "Nondiscrimination & Language Plan" on MetroPlanOrlando.org and [can be accessed here](#).

Title VI refers to a portion of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which ensures programs that receive federal assistance do not discriminate against anyone.

For questions or concerns about civil rights, nondiscrimination or for requests related to language or disability accommodation, please contact our Public Information Manager / Title VI Coordinator at (407) 481-5672, ext. 320 or [info@metroplanorlando.org](mailto:info@metroplanorlando.org)

Meetings and events at MetroPlan Orlando are open to the public and are posted in the online calendar at MetroPlanOrlando.org. The following information about how those with special needs can request reasonable accommodation is included on electronic and printed events listings:

Public participation is conducted without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, or family status. Persons wishing to express concerns, who require special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or who require language services (free of charge) should contact MetroPlan Orlando by phone or email at least three days prior to the event: (407) 481-5672 or [info@MetroPlanOrlando.org](mailto:info@MetroPlanOrlando.org)

La participación pública se lleva a cabo sin distinción de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad, discapacidad, religión o estado familiar. Las personas que deseen expresar inquietudes, que requieran asistencia especial bajo la Ley de Americanos con Discapacidad (ADA) o que requieran servicios de traducción (sin cargo) deben ponerse en contacto con MetroPlan Orlando por teléfono o por correo electrónico por lo menos tres días antes del evento: (407) 481-5672 o [info@MetroPlanOrlando.org](mailto:info@MetroPlanOrlando.org)

## How Do We Make Sure Information Gets Out to the Public?

### METROPLAN ORLANDO PROVIDES NOTICES IN VARIOUS FORMATS

MetroPlan Orlando takes steps to ensure residents are aware of important information about the planning process and about opportunities for involvement that are available to them.

#### Meeting Announcements

According to the state's Sunshine Law (Section 286 of the Florida Statutes), the public must have "reasonable notice" of the meetings of public boards and commissions. MetroPlan Orlando provides notice of the dates and times of all meetings in several ways:

- All meeting information is published at the MPO office.
- All meetings are posted on the MetroPlanOrlando.org electronic calendar, along with contact information and agendas when available.
- For some special meetings, or meetings that occur at different times or locations than normal, the organization uses **additional** tools for advance notification to support the regular methods. These may include email to database subscribers, social media, or notifications via partners or media.

#### Print & Electronic Notification

Electronic notification is primarily conducted using the organization's website, which includes a frequently visited online meeting/event calendar. In addition to time and location information, the calendar includes links to agendas and materials. Agendas are posted at least three days prior to a meeting. MetroPlan Orlando posts notices for all public meetings in accordance with requirements set forth in Florida's Government in the Sunshine law.

When appropriate, MetroPlan Orlando may also send a print or electronic message with meeting information and contact information directly to parties in the organization's database.

MetroPlan Orlando makes all materials available in print, upon request, and regularly publicizes the opportunity to ask for print materials.

#### Public Record of Meetings

Sunshine Law stipulates that minutes must be taken of all public meetings. MetroPlan Orlando takes minutes of meetings, distributes them to involved board and committee members, posts them promptly after approval, on MetroPlanOrlando.org, and provides written copies on request.

## How Does Social Media Support Our Outreach?

WE USE IT IN MANY AREAS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AND A POLICY GUIDES ITS USE

It takes a variety of communications tools to serve everyone. MetroPlan Orlando is committed to engaging the public in different ways and remaining flexible as methods gain or lose popularity. Social media use, which began more than a decade ago, has now become a must for public participation toolboxes. It brings a special set of needs and considerations.

MetroPlan Orlando's use of social media is guided by the organizational policy below.

### MetroPlan Orlando Social Media Policy

UPDATED 2019

This chapter defines the social networking and social media policy for MetroPlan Orlando. To address the changing ways Central Floridians communicate and obtain information online, we aim to use social media in conjunction with traditional outreach methods to reach a broader audience.

Social media has become a common way for people to get information and share comments, so it is a natural place to engage them on transportation planning. However, MetroPlan Orlando recognizes that public record and public access laws require a thoughtful approach. As additional guidance is provided at the state level, the organization will modify the application of social media tools, when necessary.

Should you have any questions about the terms of use of MetroPlan Orlando's social media channels or the Social Media Policy, please contact the public involvement team at 407-481-5672 or [info@MetroPlanOrlando.org](mailto:info@MetroPlanOrlando.org).

MetroPlan Orlando adheres to the following social media guidelines to ensure compliance with Florida's open government and public record laws:

#### Access

The public will be able to view all social media content posted by MetroPlan Orlando and to comment on posts within the channels. However, content generated by members of the public may not automatically appear.

At all times, MetroPlan Orlando will use social media to encourage substantive, but courteous, conversation online.

The organization will regularly monitor user comments and take appropriate action to remove from public view inappropriate comments that violate the rules of engagement, as outlined below. MetroPlan Orlando will keep a record of any comment that has been removed.

User comments containing these types of content will not be allowed:

- Unrelated to the particular social medium post being commented upon
- Campaign information pertaining to individual political campaigns or ballot measures
- Profanity

- Promoting, fostering or perpetuating discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation
- Sexual content or links to sexual content
- Solicitations relating to commercial enterprises
- Conducting or encouraging illegal activity
- Possibly compromising safety or security of public or of private entities
- Violating a legal ownership interest of any other party

## Content

MetroPlan Orlando's social media channels contain a mix of our own original content – highlighting the organization's activities and those of partners – and information repurposed from outside sources and linking to external sites. Appearance of external links **does not** constitute an official endorsement on behalf of MetroPlan Orlando.

Use of social media will primarily focus on information about transportation or related to the transportation planning process.

## Posting & Administration

As is the case with the MetroPlan Orlando website, the public outreach staff will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media channels created to promote the mission of the organization. Content on the website and social media channels should be authorized by the Public Information Manager.

All MPO-related communication through the organization's official social media is expected to be conducted in a professional manner. Neither MPO staff nor the public should use the social media channels for personal purposes.

MetroPlan Orlando will track social media activity regularly.

## Public Record

Social media records will conform with applicable public record retention schedules, as outlined in Florida Statutes. MetroPlan Orlando will post a notice on the social media channel regarding Florida public records law.

All posts and comments become part of the official public record.

MetroPlan Orlando board and committee members **are prohibited** from engaging in an exchange or discussion of matters via social media that will foreseeably come before the board or committee for official action. Such an exchange could violate Florida's Government in the Sunshine.

## Disclaimer

MetroPlan Orlando's social media channels will contain this disclaimer, referring and linking users to the Social Media Policy:

*Comments expressed on MetroPlan Orlando social media channels do not necessarily reflect the opinions and position of individual board members, administrators, or employees. In addition to information provided by MetroPlan Orlando, social media channels may contain comments and*

*opinions from unrelated third parties, which are provided as a convenience to the public or for informational purposes. These comments or opinions do not constitute endorsement or approval by MetroPlan Orlando.*

*Comments on MetroPlan Orlando social media channels are moderated according to the guidelines found in the organization's Social Media Policy, which prohibit certain types of material. These guidelines can be found [here](#). MetroPlan Orlando reserves the right to remove from public view a comment that violates the policy, without notification.*

DRAFT

## **How Do We Evaluate Our Success?**

To ensure that this plan is effective in meeting its performance measures and that it satisfies federal and state requirements related to public involvement, MetroPlan Orlando will complete an update of the Public Participation Plan every five years to reflect the latest outreach approaches.

MetroPlan Orlando staff will review the goals, strategies, and tools included in the Public Participation Plan annually to ensure activities are meaningful and effective.

A Public Participation “dashboard” for MetroPlan Orlando outreach activities will be posted to MetroPlanOrlando.org between plan updates. An example of this evaluation dashboard is included in the appendix to this plan.

The appendix information is not included with this draft document. Appendix information will be included in the approved plan and posted on MetroPlanOrlando.org.

## **Appendix**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DASHBOARDS

LIST OF APPLICABLE STATE & FEDERAL LAWS