

# Participation Plan and Title VI Plan Update 2020

## Introduction

The Participation Plan is a document that details how the CORE MPO conducts public outreach and encourages the public's involvement in the CORE MPO's activities. Due to COVID-19 many public outreach methods outlined in the Participation Plan, such as in person meetings, do not adhere to the safety recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This necessitated an update in the Participation Plan that includes new ways of reaching out to the public at a distance. The update focuses on internet use and social media applications to provide alternative opportunities for public engagement in CORE MPO activities. The CORE MPO understands that not all people can easily access or navigate the internet such as those without computers or devices, people with disabilities, and those with limited English skills. Through collaboration with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT), the CORE MPO received guidance on how to make information, updates, and opportunities accessible to all people.

The Title VI Plan is also being updated as it relates to the Participation Plan. The participation and outreach methods stated in the Participation Plan must align with the goals of Title VI. The Title VI Plan is a document that lays the groundwork for how the CORE MPO promotes diversity, representation, and inclusion within the organization. The plan specifically states our commitment to non-discrimination, and how we facilitate equality among all people. The CORE MPO is committed to non-discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, familial status, parental status, political beliefs, genetic information, income, or other protected categories. The update to the Title VI Plan will ensure that the CORE MPO provides inclusive participation.

## Public Participation Goals

The CORE MPO has four overarching goals. Listed below is each goal along with the new participation methods that fulfill each goal.

### **Goal 1: Raise interested citizens'/parties' level of understanding of the MPO transportation planning process and identify how interested citizens/parties can become involved.**

- Translate technical terms and complex topics into easily understood and visually appealing infographics and charts that can be published online or printed and provided as hardcopies to residents.
- Create a subscriber list can receive new information straight to their email inbox.
- Create recorded soundbites and videos that summarize the most important information discussed during meetings.
- Host Q&A sessions online to generate conversation and establish a good rapport with the public.
- Provide a mediator for online comment sections to foster positive communication.
- Use topic questions to facilitate discussion during public meetings.

**Goal 2: Ensure that the interested citizens/parties have been provided with adequate, appropriate, and meaningful opportunities to participate in the decision-making process.**

- Create a social media page for the CORE MPO to reach a larger audience.
- Livestream CORE MPO meetings on social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube to increase the number of platforms the public can access.
- Make the CORE MPO website easier to navigate.
- Advertise public comment and review periods on multiple platforms, like the newspaper, social media, and the radio, to reach a wider audience

**Goal 3: Identify and involve traditionally underserved communities (those communities with high concentrations of minority, low-income, Limited English Proficiency, disabled or elderly populations) in the MPO transportation planning process.**

- Put QR Codes and posters around underserved communities that link directly to CORE MPO meetings and online resources.
- Create printed versions of infographics, charts, and information that can be administered directly to elderly communities, nursing homes, and anyone without internet access.
- Provide sign language translations of meetings for deaf and low hearing individuals.
- Provide translated CORE MPO informational materials for Spanish speaking people who have low English proficiency.
- Provide closed captions to make meetings easier to follow
- Create a voluntary demographic survey to learn the composition of meetings and identify any underrepresentation.

**Goal 4: Utilize the CAC to its fullest extent to reach interested parties in the community including citizens within the planning area, the CORE MPO Board and local, state, and federal transportation and public officials.**

- Continue previous CAC goals, but at a distance, using the internet, phones, mail, and more.

Below are the previous CAC goals:

- Keep the CAC informed of MPO activities and studies.
- CAC will review all citizen concerns related to transportation policies, etc. as part of the MPO Committee review process.
- Keep the CAC informed of the progress of federally funded transportation projects, including transit projects.
- CAC will periodically review effectiveness of Participation Plan.
- Modifications to the Participation Process will be reviewed by the CAC before being approved by the CORE MPO Board.
- New CAC members will be provided with a current Orientation Manual and will be able to attend an orientation meeting on the MPO planning process.
- Invite CAC members to be added to the stakeholder lists for MPO studies of their choice and to share insight or information gleaned with the rest of the CAC and interested citizens as opportunities arise.

## Participation Tools and Techniques Explained

Tools and Techniques	Always Think it Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
<b>Live Stream on Social Media</b>			
Live streaming involves providing a live view of a meeting or video on websites other than the platform it is originally taking place on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a reliable internet connection to livestream</li> <li>• Promote the meeting to gain more viewers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides ore platforms for people to access meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If internet connection is unreliable or nonexistent, the stream will not work</li> </ul>
<b>Moderated Comment Sections</b>			
Comment sections that are monitored for off topic, rude, hateful, troll, or discriminatory comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a balance between too much and too little moderation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can foster a productive conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people may dislike getting censored</li> </ul>
<b>Soundbite Videos</b>			
Short videos that distill the original message down to the most basic and important components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarize the most important parts of the meeting</li> <li>• Make it concise, but do not omit information for brevity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can keep people’s attention because it is less of a time investment</li> <li>• People do not have to watch several hour-long meetings to get information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If too short, some important information can get lost</li> </ul>
<b>Virtual Q&amp;A’s</b>			
Online based question and answer sessions with the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sure to have a reliable internet connection</li> <li>• Promote the Q&amp;A to attract participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can build a good rapport with the public through back and forth conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires a reliable internet connection</li> </ul>
<b>Topic Questions</b>			
Questions that are asked by the organization to facilitate public discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions for the general public should use general terms and understandable language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can jump start a discussion on topics that need public input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public can still get off topic</li> </ul>
<b>Image links</b>			
The clickable link is an image rather than a string of words, letters, and numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform website visitors that the images are links to more information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The images can be interesting enough to attract clicks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People may not know that the images are links</li> </ul>
<b>Email Groups</b>			
People can subscribe to receive emails from the CORE MPO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that information is regularly emailed to subscribers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CORE MPO information can be delivered directly to people’s inboxes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People may ignore email</li> <li>• Email may be sent to junk mail</li> </ul>
<b>Online Infographics</b>			
Colorful information sheets with interesting graphics and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the infographic is easy to follow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interesting graphics can attract more readers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphics can sometimes be confusing</li> </ul>

## Title VI Related Tools and Techniques Explained

Tools and Techniques	Always Think it Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
<b>QR Codes</b>			
Internet links that can be scanned by a smartphone, tablet, and other computer devices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that CORE MPO branding is present on code</li> <li>• Protect printed QR codes from damage and rain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy and inexpensive to make</li> <li>• Can link directly to useful information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper QR codes can be easily damaged</li> <li>• Some people do not know how to use QR codes</li> </ul>
<b>Printed Infographics</b>			
Graphic displays of information that are physically printed out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be mailed or distributed directly to those who have no internet access or lack computer skills</li> <li>• Can be mailed directly to elderly communities and nursing homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informative and eye-catching, making it more interesting to read</li> <li>• Graphics can generate more understanding in transportation topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphics can sometimes be confusing if designed poorly</li> <li>• There may not be enough written text to fully explain topics</li> </ul>
<b>Sign Language Interpretations for Videos and Livestreams</b>			
A sign language interpreter translates what is said during meetings and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that sign language interpreter can do live interpretations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This makes live meetings accessible to deaf and low hearing people, so they can access information at the same time as the rest of the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be difficult to find a live interpreter</li> <li>• Reliant on having an internet connection</li> </ul>
<b>Spanish Translated Information Materials</b>			
A language interpreter translates meetings from English to Spanish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that links to translations are accessible to Spanish speaking people so information can be easily found</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language will no longer be a barrier to understanding local transportation topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be difficult to find an interpreter</li> <li>• Finding translated documents may be hard as entire website is in English.</li> </ul>
<b>Radio</b>			
Organizations like the Georgia Radio Reading Services can read news and information over the radio for visually impaired residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the CORE MPO so people can know when to tune into the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visually impaired residents can receive CORE MPO information without internet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People must tune in at the time that the information is being read, or else they will miss it.</li> </ul>

## Participation Plan and Title VI Plan Update Timeline

- Met with an advisory committee to create ideas on how to safely conduct public outreach in a pandemic (September 2020)
- Updated the public outreach methods, and incorporated more methods that are safe during Covid-19 (October 2020)
- Added more public engagement methods that focused on online and distanced outreach (October 2020)
- Provided status update to CORE MPO advisory committees and Board (October 2020)
- Provided status report on the update process to MPO committees (October 2020)
- Received comments from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) (November 2020)
- Presented the Participation Plan and Title VI Plan updates to CORE MPO Board and advisory committees (December 2020)
- Hold 45-day Public comment period on update and incorporate comments into plan (January 2021-February 2021)
- CORE MPO Board and advisory committees will review the updated plans and endorse/adopt it (February 2021)

## Why do we want you to come to our meetings and engage with the CORE MPO?

1. The CORE MPO feels that public involvement in the planning process is essential so we can understand what the community needs.
2. Transportation plans affect all people within the CORE MPO area, and public involvement helps us create plans that are best suited for the population.
3. We want citizens to stay informed about the future and direction of transportation projects in the area.
4. Because transparency is an important goal at the CORE MPO, we want all citizens to have easy access to transportation information.

## Upcoming Public Hearing Dates

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting  
February 18, 2021  
5:30 p.m.

Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation  
(ACAT) Meeting  
February 22, 2021  
1:00 p.m.

CORE MPO Board Meeting  
February 24, 2021  
10:00 a.m.

**What do you think of this plan? Feel free to take our short survey!**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ParticipationPlan>**

**You can also contact us by calling 912-651-1456 or sending an email  
to [herntona@thempc.org](mailto:herntona@thempc.org)!**

