

HOUMA-THIBODAUX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Serving urbanized areas of

CITY OF THIBODAUX
VILLAGE OF NAPOLEONVILLE
ASSUMPTION PARISH
LAFOURCHE PARISH
TERREBONNE PARISH

Public Participation Plan

Adopted July 25, 2019 by HTMPO Policy Committee



Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization (HTMPO)

(Equal Employment Opportunity Employer) 

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***Prepared by the
Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization***

Adopted by the Policy Committee of the HOUMA-THIBODAux METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION. Prepared in cooperation with the Technical Advisory Committee, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Federal Highways Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration.

The HTMPO does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, sex, color, national origin, religion or disability in access to, or operation of its programs, services, activities or in its hiring or employment practices. ADA and Title VI inquiries should be forwarded to: 333 North 19th Street, P.O. Box 3355, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821, (225)383-5203.

Civil Rights and Accessibility Compliance

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the Federal law that protects individuals and groups from discrimination on the basis of their race, color, and national origin in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance. However, Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) reference to Title VI includes other civil rights provisions of Federal statutes and related authorities to the extent that they prohibit discrimination in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance.

Therefore, South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) hereby gives public notice of its policy to uphold and assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all related acts and statutes. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice regarding SCPDC services has a right to file in writing a formal complaint with the SCPDC within one hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged occurrence.

In addition, complaints may be made to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These federal agencies are responsible for investigating complaints of discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability/handicap, sex, age, or income level in the use of federal transportation funds.

Any such complaints may be directed to:

Kevin P. Belanger
SCPDC
P.O. Box 1870
Gray, LA 70359
(985) 851-2900

FHWA - Louisiana Division
Civil Rights Specialist
5304 Flanders Drive, Suite A
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
(225) 757-7621

FTA - Region 6
Office of Civil Rights
819 Taylor Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102
(817) 978-0550

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Executive Summary

This summary of the Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization's (HTMPO) Public Participation Plan (PPP) is provided as a reference for specific public participation procedures which are further described in the body of the Plan.

Section 1. Introduction

The introduction provides an overview of the HTMPO and its major products and expectations for public participation in the transportation planning process.

Highlights:

HTMPO is responsible for three major planning products for the urbanized planning area: the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). In compliance with current federal transportation legislation (FAST Act), HTMPO has developed this Public Participation Plan to provide a framework for the public participation process which will be applied to the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (Metropolitan Transportation Plan), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program, the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects.

Section 2. Public Participation Techniques

This section provides an overview of various techniques and methods that may be used by HTMPO to carry out its public participation process.

Highlights:

HTMPO will use a variety of techniques including publication of draft plans and processes through print, public meetings, and its website. HTMPO will seek public input through its formal Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings and Policy Committee Meetings, other formal local government commission meetings, and special public meetings and workshops.

Section 3. Traditionally Underserved Populations

This section presents an overview of how HTMPO will ensure that its public participation process is compliant with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Environmental Justice, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Highlights:

HTMPO is dedicated to identifying traditionally underserved populations (e.g., low-income, minority, non-or-limited English proficiency, transportation disadvantaged populations, etc.) HTMPO will ensure that special populations are well represented in the public participation process and that plans and processes are communicated using audience appropriate methods.

Title VI

Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under and program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

As such, HTMPO is subject to the requirements of Title VI and the information reporting requirements established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to evaluate the level of compliance concerning the provision of transportation and transit services and related benefits. The HTMPO assures that no person shall, on the ground of race, color, sex, age, disability, or national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. The HTMPO assures that every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its programs or activities.

The HTMPO will ensure the following:

- Title VI language will be included in all HTMPO written agreements and monitored for compliance.
- Title VI Coordinator is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, required reporting, and other responsibilities under 23 CFR 200 and 49 CFR 21.
- Title VI Coordinator is responsible for implementation and oversight of the Title VI Plan.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 requires each Federal agency, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law, to achieve environmental justice by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and economic effects, of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. In accordance with these requirements the HTMPO will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in HTMPO's services, programs or activities.

Public meetings and workshops will be held in ADA accessible facilities locations that offer the greatest opportunity for those interested to participate. As much as possible, HTMPO will hold meetings and workshops in public places.

Section 4. Public Outreach Activities

This section presents an overview of how HTMPO will consult with key stakeholders in the development and adoption of major MPO products.

Highlights:

HTMPO will consult with interested parties in the development and adoption of the MTP, TIP, and Public Participation Plan (PPP) by requesting that those individuals or agencies indicate their interest in and preference for input and information sharing. Interested parties may include representatives of public transportation employees or customers, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation services, representatives of users of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, representatives of the

disabled, and other organizations or individuals with an interest in the transportation planning process.

HTMPO will consult with other federal, state, and local agencies that have an influence on or are affected by local and regional transportation planning decisions. Specifically, HTMPO will share draft plans and documents with those groups, and participate in meetings and on committees as appropriate to coordinate regional planning activities.

Section 5. Public Participation Policy

This section provides specific guidelines for how HTMPO will comply with the Louisiana Public Records Act (also known as Louisiana Sunshine Law), publish Official Notices, conduct Public Hearings, host special Public Meetings periodically, and make all Plans and Documents available to the public.

Highlights:

Louisiana Public Records Act - Any person of the age of majority can examine public records in the state. Penalties were set for government officials who failed to comply with the law.

Official Notices – HTMPO will provide notice of public meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods for plans and programs in newspapers of official record for our member jurisdictions around the Houma-Thibodaux region at least seven days prior.

Public Meetings – The TAC and Policy Committee shall hold public meetings periodically to solicit public comments on all of its plans, programs, and projects to be placed in the TIP. The date for the meetings shall be published as open meetings.

Availability of Plans and Documents – HTMPO will make all relevant plans and documents available at its office, on its website (www.htmppo.org).

Section 6. Plan Specific Guidelines

This section provides specific guidelines as to when HTMPO will encourage the public and interested parties to participate in the development, adoption, amendment, and review of major MPO plans.

Highlights:

HTMPO staff, under guidance from the Technical Advisory Committee, is responsible for the preparation of each draft document. After the TAC has endorsed the draft, copies are placed in local libraries and an official notice is made to solicit public review and comment. The Policy Committee will consider each plan for adoption at a public hearing after all comments are received, documented, evaluated, and addressed.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization

Professional staff for the Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization (HTMPO) is housed under the parent organization of the South Central Planning and Development Organization (SCPDC). SCPDC is a public, nonprofit organization serving municipalities and public service agencies in the following Louisiana parishes: Assumption, Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. John the Baptist, St. James, St. Mary, and St. Charles (hereafter termed the “South Central Region”). Through its professional staff of planners, cartographers, economic development specialist and others, SCPDC offers a range of services in the following areas:

- Transportation and land use planning and programming
- Planning and Community Services
- Economic and community development
- Mapping and aerial photography
- IT services
- Building inspection and permitting

SCPDC strengthens local government by establishing unity in dealing with federal state and agencies and legislative bodies. It has provided technical assistance to local governments on regional concerns such as air, water, and transportation priorities and goals. It has, throughout its tenure, produced studies or plans in the areas of transportation, community facilities, and socio-economic trends.

The HTMPO focuses on meeting federal and state requirements for the metropolitan planning process for the parishes of Terrebonne, Lafourche, and Assumption. Also included in the process are the City of Thibodaux and the Town of Lockport.

1.2 MPO Plans

In 2015, the U.S. Congress passed and the President signed into law the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The FAST Act requires the HTMPO to focus efforts on implementing and updating a regional long-range transportation plan. The work, which is called Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), takes the form of studies, data collection and analysis, the use of management systems, forecasts of future travel based on future land use, and prioritization of projects for funding and implementation

The FAST Act also requires HTMPO to produce and oversee a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the region’s short-term transportation investment plan. The TIP prioritizes the region’s transportation related projects within the constraints of federal, state and local funding that the region can reasonably expect to receive within the next four years. Projects that are included in the TIP must be selected from or be consistent with an approved MTP. In order to develop plans that are derived from public sentiment, there must be adequate public participation in the development of both the MTP and the TIP.

The following sections present a brief discussion of HTMPO's major transportation and planning products for the Houma-Thibodaux Urbanized Area. All are available to the public and interested parties at HTMPO's website (www.htmppo.org) and at the office located at 5058 W. Main Street, Houma, LA 70360. An appointment is suggested so that HTMPO staff is available to answer questions. HTMPO can be reached at (985) 851-2900.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The MTP is a long-range (25-year) multimodal strategy and capital improvement program developed to guide the effective investment of public funds in transportation facilities. The MTP is updated every five years and may be amended as a result of changes in projected federal, state, and local funding; major investment studies; congestion management system plans; interstate interchange justification studies; and environmental impact studies.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a four-year program that lists all regionally significant and federally funded projects and services in the MPO planning area such as highway and street projects, public transit projects, and bicycle/pedestrian enhancements. Projects that are included in the TIP must be consistent with, or be selected from an approved MTP. Additionally, the TIP must be fiscally constrained or have funding mechanisms already in place for all projects and strategies. The TIP can be amended as a result of changes in funding or need. Administrative modifications to the TIP do not require a specific public participation plan, but these modifications are discussed in public meetings where comments are accepted. The TIP is updated every four years.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP is a one-year document developed by HTMPO staff to focus work efforts and planning funds anticipated in the upcoming fiscal year. All federally funded planning activities are required to be in the UPWP and have to be developed through required planning factors. The UPWP is reviewed and discussed at the regularly scheduled TAC and Policy Committee meetings.

1.3 Public Participation in the Planning Process

HTMPO encourages active participation by the public and other interested parties in the development of all transportation plans and programs, particularly the major products. HTMPO believes that the distribution of information regarding regional transportation planning and decision-making needs to be inclusive of as many in the public as can reasonably be reached. Interested parties and other federal, state, and local agencies are given a fair opportunity to participate in the planning process.

It is the policy of HTMPO to take all public and stakeholder comments into account in the development and adoption of plans and programs. The processes outlined in this document form the basis for providing the opportunity for the general public and key stakeholders to participate in the transportation planning process. This Public Participation Plan (PPP) has been developed to meet federal requirements outlined by FAST Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Environmental Justice, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Public Participation Planning Goals

The goals of the HTMPO Public Participation Plan are based on the following fundamental environmental justice principles:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Education

- To explain HTMPO plans and activities in a concise and straightforward manner through the website.
- To explain how transportation plans are affected by federal mandates by providing links to the mandates.

Outreach

- To increase awareness of and interest in transportation plans and the transportation planning process using innovative approaches. HTMPO will give timely public notice; provide complete information; give reasonable public access to key decisions; and support early and continuing involvement of the public in the development of plans and TIPs. There will be opportunities for interested parties including citizens, affected public agencies, and representatives of transportation agency employees, users of the systems and the private providers of transportation to be included in the early stages of the plan development/update process. The HTMPO will include a statement in all public notices for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as follows:

“This public notice of public participation activities and the thirty-day time period established for public review and comment on the TIP will satisfy the program-of-projects (POP) requirements of Urbanized Area Formula Program.”

Participation

- To provide frequent opportunities for interested parties from the private business community, public officials, neighborhood organizations, the physically challenged and other groups impacted by transportation plans to participate in the development of HTMPO transportation plans and to encourage public participation in transportation planning activities at every level.

2.0 Public Participation Techniques

This section provides a description of the various techniques that will be used to carry out HTMPO's public participation process. Opportunities for public input are not limited to those contained in this section. Given the significance of the MTP, TIP, and UPWP, other public participation techniques may be employed to increase awareness of and provide ample opportunities for public participation in the development of HTMPO products. A set of guidelines as to when the public will have an opportunity to review and comment on specific HTMPO products is provided in Section 6.0.

2.1 Media

Press Releases and Public Service Announcements

In order to broaden the participation in transportation planning decisions, HTMPO will use media press releases and public service announcements to announce opportunities for the public to participate in the development of upcoming plans and products.

Registered news media and organizations (such as major neighborhood organizations and minority organizations) on HTMPO's email list will receive all press releases. Public Service Announcements will be distributed to the appropriate media.

Newspapers

Notices of all meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods are published in the following newspapers: *The Houma Courier*, *The Daily Comet* and *The Bayou Journal*.

2.2 Presentations / Meetings / Workshops

Formal Meetings

Formal meetings, such as the Policy Committee meeting and TAC meetings, will be held in ADA-accessible facilities. HTMPO will select the location, size, and setup of meeting facilities based on the specific characteristics of the audience and the type of information to be presented. A sign-in sheet will be used at each meeting to document attendees and to maintain contact information for notices to the public and stakeholders.

Public meetings and workshops will be held in ADA-accessible facilities that offer the greatest opportunity for those interested to participate. As much as possible, HTMPO will hold meetings and workshops in public places that are accessible to all members of the community. For all public meetings, HTMPO will seek to increase participation by creating a welcoming and inviting environment. All meeting announcements contain the following statement:

ADA Notice: For special accommodations for this meeting, contact the MPO Administrator via phone (985) 851-2900 or email <insert email address> at least one week in advance.

Tag-on Meetings

At various times, the HTMPO staff may request to appear on the agendas of local planning commission, town/city council, parish council, or other public meetings to communicate the purpose and need for HTMPO and its planning process. This method can be an effective way to encourage discussion about the effects that local land use zoning and sub-division decisions can have on region-wide planning efforts.

In addition, special presentations may be made to inform the public about specific times and locations where input can be given on the MTP, the TIP and the annual UPWP.

2.3 Other Tools

HTMPO Website

Many people use the internet as their main source of data and information. The physically disabled are especially able to use this source to both receive input and provide feedback, while not being required to physically attend meetings.

The HTMPO website (www.htmppo.org) provides a comprehensive resource to people wanting information about MPO products or activities. Public notices of meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods for the MTP, TIP, and UPWP and other plans are posted to the website. The site also contains electronic versions of MPO products, a public comment form, and links to MPO member jurisdictions.

In addition, the website is a clearing-house of sorts for all information pertaining to the MPO. Traffic count data, information on various projects and studies, a calendar of events, contact information for MPO staff, links to area traffic camera and to sign up for road closure text messages, and links to member jurisdictions websites are all accessible online.

Mailing Lists

HTMPO has a comprehensive e-mail list of citizens, businesses, agencies, and other individuals with an interest in the transportation planning process. Upon request, HTMPO will add the email addresses of interested parties to this list.

Meeting notices, agenda items, and links to all documents will be distributed to all interested parties prior to any action being taken on them.

Public Libraries

Libraries in each of the three parishes within the urbanized region will receive copies of the draft MPO products for public review and comment. A list of these libraries is located in Appendix A.

3.0 Traditionally Underserved Populations

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects persons from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. President Clinton's Executive Order 12898 provides further guidance to federal assistance programs to ensure that low-income and minority populations are not discriminated against by Federal, state or local agencies receiving Federal monies. Specifically, the Federal Executive Order directive requires federal programs:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations,
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process, and
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and/ or low-income populations.

Because of the extreme importance of an all-inclusive outreach program that ensures compliance with Title VI and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, HTMPO will place emphasis on efforts to reach out to traditionally underserved or underrepresented segments of the region's population including:

- Low Income
- Federal Assistance Recipients
- Minority
- Elderly
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or English spoken as a second language
- Disabled Populations
- Zero Car Households
- Single Parent Families
- School-Aged Children

Identification of Special Populations

HTMPO utilizes the latest U.S. Census data and American Community Survey data to identify target populations at the block group level. Prior to the implementation of special outreach efforts, HTMPO staff will use several methods to identify where special populations are likely to live and work. HTMPO has already identified many of these communities and areas within the three-parish region for use in development of future plans.

Enhanced Outreach Methods

When appropriate for project-specific meetings, HTMPO will use enhanced public outreach and communications methods for hard-to-reach or traditionally underserved populations. Meetings and workshops will be held at locations that are ADA accessible, convenient, and most effective in encouraging turnout and input.

Following are additional methods HTMPO may use to reach out to special populations:

- HTMPO will use visualization methods (maps, displays, charts, and other static and interactive engagements) to make the topic relevant to the target audience. The extensive use of maps, aerial photographs and simple charts allow for greater participation and understanding by those that may be more visually oriented and will allow for greater interaction by participants;
- If meetings are to be held in areas where there is a predominance of non-English speaking populations, HTMPO will have people available to help translate questions and responses;
- When appropriate, HTMPO will use community-based TV, radio stations, and websites to target messages and solicit input from specific population segments.

4.0 Public Outreach Activities

HTMPO will utilize a variety of mechanisms which will be selected as appropriate for the scope, needs and allocated resources of the various plans to be created.

The HTMPO hosts public meetings to discuss topics and projects of interest with the public and makes presentations as requested at civic meetings and to other public agencies. When hosting public meetings, HTMPO provides adequate notice to the public and follows all federally prescribed guidelines regarding public comment periods for documents such as the MTP, TIP, and UPWP. HTMPO will work through a variety of means to ensure that a good-faith effort has been made to notify the general public, such as posting in work places when appropriate and hosting meetings at times that are convenient for those most impacted by the plan or project at hand. The MPO will generally advertise meetings at least two weeks prior to planned meetings, though exception may be made for urgently needed special meetings called by the MPO Policy Committee Chairman.

HTMPO will use visualization methods (maps, displays, charts, and other static and interactive engagements) to make the topic relevant to the target audience. The extensive use of maps, aerial photographs and simple charts allow for greater participation and understanding by those that may be more visually oriented and will allow for greater interaction by participants.

5.0 Public Participation Policy

5.1 Open Public Meeting Act

- Every meeting of any public body shall be open to the public unless closed pursuant to R.S. 42:6, R.S. 42:6.1, or R.S. 42:6.2. - §5. A., Louisiana Open Meetings Law.
- After notifying the general public, including traditionally underserved populations, the public shall be afforded the opportunity to comment on current agenda items at the beginning of every meeting of the HTMPO Policy Committee members. The chair of HTMPO Policy Committee shall determine the time to be allotted to each speaker. For those who choose not to speak or are limited by disability, language or other barrier to speaking, or for those who are not able to attend an open meeting, comments may be submitted to HTMPO staff for consideration during the meeting. Comments received outside of the regular meeting should be submitted by letter, email, fax, website or other written format to be provided to HTMPO Policy Committee.

5.2 Responsibilities

It is the intent of the HTMPO Policy Committee to pursue the active involvement of key individuals and groups with an interest in transportation planning projects in the review, design and the development of its plans and to develop transportation plans that reflect the needs of the region. Groups that will be targeted for participation in particular include private alternative transportation providers, transportation enforcement agencies, local port authorities, local toll authorities, community and neighborhood organizations, local elected officials, transportation and environmental interest groups and groups representing the elderly and the disabled. To these ends, the HTMPO will undertake the following responsibilities:

- To conduct public meetings for the development and the review of the Transportation Improvement Program, the Long-Range Plan, Unified Planning Work Program and any other significant transportation plans developed through HTMPO.
- To provide a forum for the review and discussion of significant amendments to adopted plans and actively solicit input from the public in the design and the development of its plans.
- To provide adequate notice and publicity regarding public meetings to develop and amend its transportation and related air quality plans.
- To involve key individuals and groups with an interest in transportation and related air quality issues in the development and review of its plans.
- To solicit the participation of and establish a dialogue with groups which have traditionally had limited involvement such as civic and neighborhood organizations.
- To increase availability of and access to planning documents and HTMPO informational materials.
- To periodically evaluate the transportation needs of the community through meetings or surveys.
- To continue to develop educational materials for the general public regarding transportation planning issues.

6.0 Plan Specific Guidelines

6.1 Public Participation Plan

- A. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) shall be assessed periodically based on changes in local, state, or federal legislation, in response to periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of public participation techniques (*Section 2.0*) that are used by HTMPO.
- B. Following the adoption of an update to the MTP, an assessment shall be made of the types of public participation techniques that were used, especially public input meetings and public hearings.
- C. PPP shall be assessed and updated regularly, following the schedule of the MTP update. Additionally, if substantial changes occur to local, state, or federal legislation, the PPP shall be evaluated for compliance with the new legislation.
- D. When an update to the PPP is made, the public participation process shall follow that of the TIP (*section 6.3*) with the exception that the public review period shall be forty-five (45) days and relevant state and federal agencies shall be informed and provided with an opportunity to comment.
- E. HTMPO will consult with interested parties in the development of the PPP. Interested parties include those individuals, associations, organizations, agencies, and/or businesses that are included in HTMPO contact list or that have been identified as representing some interest in the transportation system or transportation disadvantaged populations (*sections 3.0 and 4.0*). HTMPO will notify those parties informing them of the purpose for, and process to update the PPP. Interested parties will be asked to identify their preferred methods of participation and information sharing with the MPO. MPO contacts also will be given an opportunity to indicate their interest in receiving periodic updates about particular MPO products, or elements of HTMPO planning process. All parties will be given the HTMPO contact to receive the instruction on how to access and comment on the draft PPP.

6.2 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

- A. At the periodic public meetings the Policy Committee shall review the planning assumptions and development process for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and obtain comments from the public on the validity of the MTP. Any person desiring to attend the meeting and make a comment, and who needs special consideration such as a sign-language interpreter, can contact HTMPO at least seven days in advance, at the number listed on the published notice, to make special accommodations. Comments may also be provided to the HTMPO staff prior to the public meeting. These comments may be in the form of a letter, email, fax or comment submitted to the HTMPO website.
- B. Public review and comment opportunities shall be provided when the plan is originally adopted or amended. HTMPO will determine the appropriate mix of public participation techniques (identified in *section 2.0*) as part of the early development of the MTP. Public outreach and involvement efforts will be clearly communicated to the public and interested parties using, at a minimum, the guidelines for official notices provided in *section 5.2* of this plan.
- C. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall guide the preparation of the MTP for the MPO. HTMPO will search for appropriate consultation from State and local

agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the MTP. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate (1) comparison of MTPs with State conservation plans or maps, if available, or (2) comparison of MTPs with inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.

- D. The TAC shall review and endorse the draft MTP for consideration by the Policy Committee. The Public shall have opportunity to comment on the MTP during this meeting.
- E. The HTMPO shall publish the draft MTP and place copies in selected public libraries in the region (Appendix B). These copies will be distributed to the libraries a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to final consideration by the Policy Committee. Additionally, an electronic version of the draft will be placed on the HTMPO website.
- F. An official notice stating that the TAC has endorsed a draft MTP for public review and comment shall be placed in the newspaper (*The Courier*, *The Daily Comet*, and *The Bayou Journal*) at least 30 days prior to consideration by the Policy Committee. The notice shall invite the public to review and comment on the draft MTP. The notice shall specify the date, time, and location of the public hearing. Press releases announcing the meetings will be furnished to all news organizations registered with HTMPO and on their email lists.
- G. A public hearing shall be held prior to adoption of the MTP by the Policy Committee.
- H. At the Policy Committee meeting, the MPO Administrator shall report all comments received from all sources prior to the Policy Committee meeting.
- I. The public shall be given the opportunity to provide comment at the public hearings. The Policy Committee may establish reasonable time limits for each presentation, considering the time constraints of the meeting and complexity of the issue. Any person desiring to attend the meeting and make a comment and who needs special consideration such as a sign-language interpreter, may contact HTMPO at least seven days beforehand at the number listed on the published notice to work with the HTMPO staff to make special accommodations.
- J. In the event the Policy Committee determines there are significant unresolved comments on the MTP, it may defer the adoption of the plan until a subsequent meeting. MPO staff will then produce a written summary and an analysis of comments which may lead to amendments to the draft plan. Should those amendments be significant, or if the final plan differs significantly from the draft presented to the public, an additional 30-day review period shall be allowed. A summary and analysis of the disposition of public comments will be incorporated into the final.
- K. The Policy Committee must close the final public hearing prior to a Committee vote on the MTP.
- L. Amendments to the MTP must follow the same process and procedure. HTMPO may administratively modify the MTP using the same criteria used to administratively modify the TIP (Appendix C).
- M. Opportunities for general public input are not limited to those contained in this section. Given the significance of the MTP, other public participation techniques may be employed to increase awareness and provide ample opportunities for public participation (section 2.0).

6.3 Transportation Improvement Program

- A. Public review and comment opportunities shall be provided when the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is being adopted or amended. HTMPO will determine the appropriate mix of public participation techniques (identified in *section 2.0*) as part of the early development of the TIP. Public outreach and involvement efforts will be clearly communicated to the public and interested parties using, at a minimum, the guidelines for official notices provided in *section 5.2* of this plan.
- B. HTMPO's Policy Committee will allow the public to suggest eligible transportation projects for inclusion in the TIP.
- C. The MPO Administrator and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall review the input from the public, HTMPO Policy Committee, input from the state, and input from the local MPO member jurisdictions in the creation of the TIP.
- D. At the March Technical Advisory Committee meeting, the TAC shall review and endorse the draft TIP for consideration by the Policy Committee. The Public shall have opportunity to comment on the TIP during this meeting.
- E. The HTMPO staff shall publish the program and place copies in selected public libraries in the urbanized region (Appendix B). These copies must be distributed to the libraries a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to final consideration and adoption by the Policy Committee Meeting. Additionally, an electronic version of the draft will be placed on the HTMPO website.
- F. A notice stating that the TAC has endorsed a draft TIP for public review and comment shall be placed in the notice newspaper. The notice shall specify the dates, times and location of the forthcoming public hearing. Similar press releases shall be furnished to all news organizations registered with the HTMPO staff. This notice and press release shall be published/mailed a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which the TIP will be considered by the Policy Committee.
- G. A public hearing shall be held by the Policy Committee prior to voting on the Transportation Improvement Program.
- H. At the public meeting, the MPO Administrator shall report to the Policy Committee all comments received in writing prior to the meeting. These comments may be in the form of a letter, email, fax or comment submitted on HTMPO website.
- I. The public shall be afforded the opportunity for comment at the public meetings. The Policy Committee may establish reasonable time limits for each presentation, considering the time constraints of the meeting and complexity of the issue. Any person desiring to attend the meeting and make a comment who needs special consideration such as a sign-language interpreter, can contact HTMPO at least seven days beforehand at the number listed on the published notice to make special accommodations.
- J. In the event the Policy Committee determines there are significant unresolved comments on the TIP, it may defer the program until a subsequent meeting. MPO staff will then produce a written summary and an analysis of comments which may lead to amendments to the draft program. Should those amendments be significant, or if the final TIP differs significantly from the draft presented to the public, an additional 30-day review period shall be allowed. A summary and analysis of the disposition of public comments will be incorporated into the final TIP.
- K. The Policy Committee must close the final public hearing prior to a Committee vote on the TIP.

- L. Amendments and Administrative Modifications to the TIP shall be administered through the approved TIP Adjustment Process and Procedures (*Appendix C*).

6.4 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- A. Public review and comment opportunities shall be provided when the Unified Planning Work Program is adopted, or amended. HTMPO will determine the appropriate mix of public participation techniques (identified in *Section 2.0*) as part of the early development of the UPWP. Public review and comment periods will be clearly communicated to the public and interested parties using, at a minimum, the guidelines for official notices provided in *Section 5.2* of this plan.
- B. At the March Technical Advisory Committee meeting, the TAC shall recommend a UPWP for public review and comment. The Public shall have opportunity to comment on the UPWP during this meeting. A notice to that effect shall be placed in the notice newspapers listed in *Section 2, subsections A & B*.
- C. The notice shall state that copies of the draft UPWP, as endorsed by the TAC, are available in selected public libraries throughout the urbanized region for public review and comment. The notice shall specify the dates, times, and location of forthcoming public hearing. Press releases shall also be furnished to all other news organizations registered with HTMPO.
- D. The notice and press release shall be published/mailed a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the April Policy Committee meeting at which time a public hearing shall be held by the Policy Committee prior to voting on the UPWP.
- E. At the public hearing, the MPO Administrator shall report to the Policy Committee all comments received in writing prior to the meeting. These comments may be in the form of a letter, email, fax or comment submitted on HTMPO website.
- F. The public shall be given the opportunity for comment at each public hearing. The Policy Committee may establish reasonable time limits for each presentation, considering the time constraints of the meeting and complexity of the issue. Any person desiring to attend the meeting and make a comment and who needs special consideration such as a sign-language interpreter, can contact HTMPO at least seven days beforehand at the number listed on the published notice to request special accommodations.
- G. In the event the Policy Committee determines there are significant unresolved comments on the UPWP, it may defer the program until a subsequent meeting. MPO staff will then produce a written summary and an analysis of comments which may lead to amendments to the draft program. Should those amendments be significant, or if the final UPWP differs significantly from the draft presented to the public, an additional 30-day review period shall be allowed. A summary and analysis of the disposition of public comments will be incorporated into the final UPWP.
- H. The Policy Committee must close the public hearing prior to a vote on the UPWP.
- I. Amendments to the UPWP (those that involve the addition or deletion of funds, alter the scope of work tasks, or add/delete a work task) must follow the same process and procedure outlined above. Adjustments, changes that do not involve a change in scope and/or adjustment funding amounts by no more than 15%, do not require a public input process.
- J. All tasks and studies in the work program shall be designed to allow the public reasonable opportunity for input as the study progresses. The project's scope of

work shall outline the public input process used for the task. For planning efforts such as sub-area or corridor studies, bikeway and pedestrian plans, and corridor studies, a minimum of two (2) public meetings shall be held, one by the TAC and one by the Policy Committee.

Appendix A

Public Library List

Terrebonne Parish

Main Branch
151 Library Drive
Houma, LA 70360
(985) 876-5861

Lafourche Parish

Thibodaux Branch
314 St. Mary Street
Thibodaux, LA 70301
(985) 447-4119

Lockport Branch
720 Crescent Ave.
Lockport, LA 70374
(985) 532-3158

Assumption Parish

Main Napoleonville Branch
293 Napoleon Avenue
Napoleonville, LA 70390

Appendix B

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization (HTMPO)

The HTMPO's **<committee name>** is scheduled to meet at **<time>** on **<date>** at **<location and address>**. Future meetings of the Policy Committee are scheduled to be held on **<date 1>**; **<date 2>**; and **<date 3>**. The committee will be reviewing and allowing public comment on the TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM, the METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN and all amendments related to these documents. Copies of these documents can be found in area libraries, the SCPDC office, and online at <http://www.htmpto.org>.

ADA Notice: For special accommodations for this meeting, contact the **<MPO Administrator>** via phone (985) 851-2900 or **<email>** at least one week in advance.

If you are interested in further information or in contributing in the public participation process, please use the contact info above or simply participate in the public comment period held at the beginning of each meeting.

This public notice of public participation activities and the thirty-day time period established for public review and comment on the TIP will satisfy the program of-projects (POP) requirements of Urbanized Area Formula Program.

Appendix C

Procedures to Amend or Administratively Modify the Louisiana Statewide (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs)

The following procedures are applicable for processing amendments or administrative modifications to the Statewide (STIP) or Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). In accordance with the provisions of **23 CFR 450.218(b)**, the STIP shall be developed in cooperation with the MPO designated for a metropolitan area. Each metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP) shall be included without change in the STIP, directly or by reference, after approval of the TIP by the MPO and the Governor. A metropolitan TIP in a nonattainment or maintenance area is subject to a FHWA/FTA conformity finding before inclusion in the STIP. In areas outside a metropolitan planning area but within an air quality nonattainment or maintenance area containing any part of a metropolitan area, projects must be included in the regional emissions analysis that supported the conformity determination of the associated metropolitan TIP before they are added to the STIP.

In accordance with **23 CFR 450.218(n)**, projects in any of the first four years of the STIP may be moved to any other of the first four years of the STIP subject to the project selection requirements of **23 CFR 450.222**. Such modifications do not require formal approval, provided expedited project selection procedures have been adopted in accordance with **23 CFR 450.222** and the required interagency consultation or coordination is accomplished and documented.

An **Administrative Modification** is a minor revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that includes minor changes to project phase costs, funding sources of previously included projects and project phase initiation dates. An administrative modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint or a conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas).

Administrative Modification thresholds include:

1. Revisions to a project description without changing the project scope or which do not conflict with the pertinent environmental document;
2. Minor changes to the cost of a project phase (Feasibility, Environmental, R/W, Utility Relocation, Engineering, Construction):
 - a. Funding changes are limited to \$1,250,000 for project phases \leq \$5,000,000.
 - b. For project phases $>$ \$5,000,000, an administrative modification is limited to budget changes of less than 25% in funding
3. Minor changes to funding sources of previously included project phases that do not affect fiscal constraint of the STIP or the ability to complete the project as initially described
4. Minor changes to project phase initiation dates as long as the project stays within the approved STIP/TIP timeframe and do not affect fiscal constraint of the STIP or the ability to complete the project as initially described. **23 CFR 450.218(n)**
5. A change in the project implementing agency;
6. A split or combination of individually listed projects; as long as cost, schedule, and scope remain unchanged;
7. The addition or deletion of projects from grouped project (line item) listings as long as the line item total funding amounts stay within the guidelines in number two above.

Administrative modifications can be processed in accordance with these procedures provided that:

1. It does not affect the air quality conformity determination, including timely implementation of Transportation Control Measures (TCMs), **and**
2. It does not impact financial constraint of the STIP or the ability to complete the project as described.

Each MPO approved administrative modification needs to be published online separately from TIP amendments. The MPO should summarize this as an information item to the MPO Committee members each month. The MPO Board may delegate approval of administrative modifications to the MPO's Executive Director. If the MPO Board delegates approval of administrative modifications to the Executive Director, the MPO will need to provide copies of the delegation to the LADOTD, FHWA, and FTA. Any administrative modifications will be forwarded to the LADOTD Transportation Planning Section and Public Transportation Section for approval on behalf of the Governor.

If a project affected by an administrative modification is located within the planning boundaries of an MPO, the MPO must first generate and/or accept the administrative modification for its TIP. Once approved by the MPO, then LADOTD, on behalf of the Governor, can incorporate the administrative modification into Louisiana's STIP. The LADOTD will immediately notify the MPO, FHWA, and FTA of any approved administrative modification(s). The LADOTD can incorporate a STIP administrative modification before it is approved by the MPO as long as the TIP administrative modification process has started and if waiting for the TIP administrative modification documentation will delay the letting.

For projects in a rural area, once approved by the LADOTD, on behalf of the Governor, the administrative modification will be incorporated into Louisiana's STIP. The LADOTD will immediately notify the MPO, FHWA, and FTA of any approved administrative modification(s).

An **Amendment** is a revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that involves a major change to a project or project phase included in a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP, including the addition or deletion of a project or a project phase, a major change in project/project phase cost or a major change in design concept or scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. An amendment is a revision that requires public review and comment, redemonstrations of fiscal constraint and/or a conformity determination (for metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs involving "non-exempt" projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas). TIP amendments with proof of action must be posted on the respective MPO website within 30 days. In the context of a long-range statewide transportation plan, an amendment is a revision approved by the State in accordance with its public involvement process.

If a project affected by an amendment is located within the planning boundaries of an MPO, it must first be amended in the TIP before it can be amended in the STIP. Once approved by the LADOTD, on behalf of the Governor, the amendment will be incorporated into Louisiana's STIP. The LADOTD will immediately notify the MPO, FHWA, and FTA of any approved amendment(s).

Amendments: are all other changes to STIP/TIPs that are outside of the administrative modification listed above.

Timeline for Amendment Approval

When an amendment is sent to the FHWA, it will take a maximum of two weeks to be processed. The FHWA can partially approve an amendment on a project by project basis. Any project or phase of a project not approved will be resubmitted once questions and/or concerns have been resolved.

Dispute Resolution

If a question arises regarding the interpretation of an administrative modification or an amendment; the LADOTD, FHWA, FTA and MPO, as appropriate, will work to resolve the issue in coordination with each other. If after consultation, the parties disagree on the definition of what constitutes an administrative modification or an amendment, the final decision rests with the FTA for transit projects and FHWA for highway projects.

Quick Reference Chart for Amendments vs. Modifications

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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding changes are limited to \$1,250,000 for projects ≤ \$5,000,000 For projects > \$5,000,000 an administrative modification is classified as a change of less than 25% funding 	Major changes in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding changes that are greater than \$1,250,000 for projects ≤ \$5,000,000 Change of 25% or more in funding
Minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects that do not affect fiscal constraint	Major changes to funding sources, such as adding a new federal funding source for a project not previously federally funded
Minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates as long as the project stays within the approved STIP/TIP timeframe and does not affect fiscal constraint	
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	

Amendments and Administrative Modifications to a Line Item

Line Items are evaluated per phase, per fund, per year. Adding a new funding source to a phase of a line item in a particular FFY would require a STIP amendment if it affected fiscal constraint (i.e. the current STIP includes \$10,000,000 of NHPP in FFY 2019 on Phase 6 of L.000053; by adding \$5,000,000 in STPFLEX to that line item in that year and phase so that after approved, the current STIP will include \$10,000,000 in NHPP and \$5,000,000 in STPFLEX in FFY 2019 on Phase 6 of L.000053). Adding a phase to a line item also requires a STIP amendment.

For a line item phase, fund, year combination with a cost > \$5,000,000, changing the amount by more than 25% on that fund, in that phase and in that year requires a STIP amendment. For a line item phase, fund, year combination with a cost > \$5,000,000, changing the amount less than 25% on that fund, in that phase and in that year can be done by a STIP administrative modification.

For a line item phase, fund, year combination with a cost ≤ \$5,000,000, the amount can be changed up to \$1,250,000 by a STIP administrative modification; changing the amount by more than \$1,250,000 requires a STIP amendment.

Adjusting existing amounts on funds within a phase and within a particular FFY of a line item that does not affect fiscal constraint of the STIP can be done by a STIP administrative modification (i.e. changing \$10,000,000 of NHPP and \$20,000,000 of STPFLEX in FFY 2019 on Phase 6 of L.000053 to \$3,000,000 of NHPP and \$27,000,000 of STPFLEX in FFY 2019 on Phase 6 of L.000053).

Adding a fund within a phase and within a particular FFY of a line item that does not affect fiscal constraint of the STIP can be done by a STIP administrative modification (i.e. adding STCASH or NFA or STBONDS or STGEN or LOCAL because additional funding sources have been identified on a project or it has been decided that projects need to be authorized as an advance construction project).

Splitting an existing fund into multiple funds within a phase and within a particular FFY of a line item which does not affect fiscal constraint of the STIP can be done by a STIP administrative modification (i.e. splitting \$10,000,000 of NHPP in FFY 2019 on Phase 6 of L.000053 into \$2,000,000 of NHPP and \$8,000,000 of STPFLEX in FFY 2019 on Phase 6 of L.000053; total remains \$10,000,000).