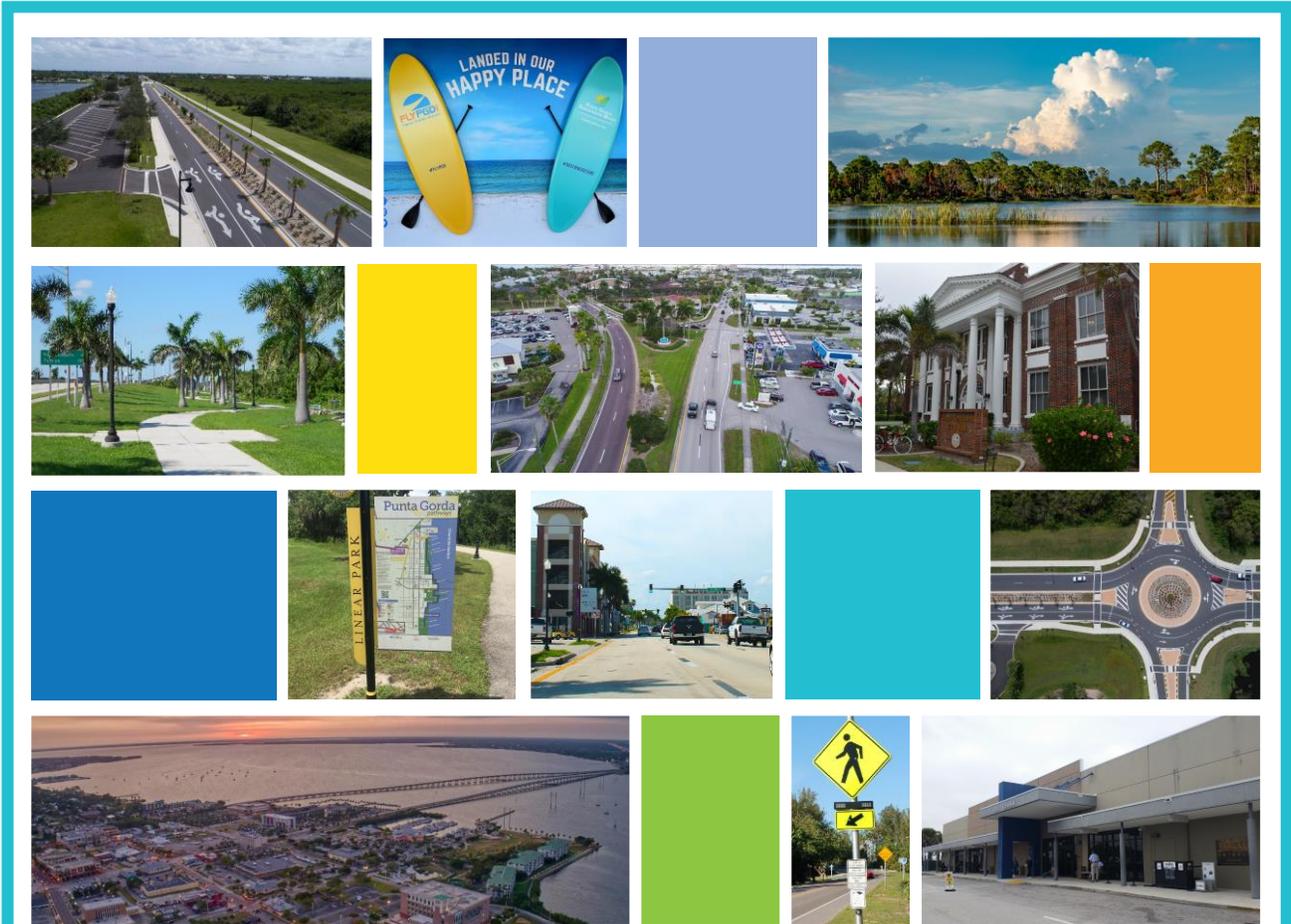


# Charlotte County - Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization



## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

*Adopted July 20, 2020 | Draft Revision 2022*



# Charlotte County - Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. <u>PURPOSE</u></b> .....	4
<b>2. <u>BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE MPO AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT</u></b> .....	6
a. Charlotte County – Punta Gorda Regional Coordination .....	8
<b>3. <u>THE MPO’S ROLE IN PUBLIC INVOLVMENT — INCLUDING TELECONFERENCES AND ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES</u></b> .....	9
a. Teleconferences and Alternative Public Involvement Strategies .....	11
<b>4. <u>PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICIES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES — INCLUDING FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND TITLE VI LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) REQUIREMENTS</u></b> .....	14
<b>5. <u>DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ELEMENTS</u></b> .....	20
a. Mailing Lists/Contact Database.....	20
b. Meetings to Stimulate Public Participation .....	21
c. Open Houses/Workshops/Virtual Meetings and Workshops.....	21
<i>Procedures the MPO will utilize to ensure the MPO meets current Federal and State requirements related to virtual public involvement include</i> .....	23
a. Field Trips/Site Visits .....	23
b. Short Films and Videos.....	23
c. Public Meetings.....	24
d. Notices for Public Meetings, Workshops, and Public Participation Events .....	24
e. Meeting Agendas.....	25
f. Information (MPO Website and Interactive Mapping Tools).....	25
g. Media Outreach.....	26
h. Citizens’ Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committees, and Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (LCB).....	27
i. Written and Electronic Forms of Communication — Including Brochures and Evaluation/ Comment Forms .....	28
j. Public Participation Techniques and Performance Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) .....	29
<b>6. <u>CONCLUSION</u></b> .....	30
<b>7. <u>APPENDICES</u></b> .....	31

## 1. PURPOSE

All decisions or actions made by a transportation planning agency affect someone to some degree. Whether it's a long-range plan to build a major highway or bridge or a short-term road improvement or maintenance project, someone will feel the impact of these actions. In a sense, these impacted people are the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) customers, and they deserve every opportunity to communicate their wants and needs on all transportation planning and implementation issues.

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) is designed to provide a proactive public involvement process that includes the dissemination of accurate and timely information to the public, full public access for addressing and commenting on all transportation issues, and opportunities for members of the public to express their views ensuring they are heard, noted, and encouraged. All MPO-directed public involvement activities including this document are consistent with Federal requirements.

There is no "cookie-cutter" approach to informing, involving, and connecting with the public. Every proposed project, improvement or program is different and requires the use of different strategies and goals. Yet, every project has one common aspect: there will be some level of public involvement, ranging from local government notification to public meetings.

Active public involvement leads to transportation improvements which meet community needs and desires. The MPO will utilize this document and subsequent reviews in conducting public participation activities leading up to the adoption of MPO work tasks such as: the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP); LRTP Amendments the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and TIP

Amendments. The MPO will undertake efforts to include public involvement aids in the building of a more credible and trusting relationship between transportation agencies and the community they serve through partnering, outreach, active listening, and real two-way communication.

The MPO is cognizant that those groups directly affected by transportation decisions may be the most difficult segments of the metropolitan population to reach. Many citizens, such as members of minority groups, people with low incomes, and transit-dependent individuals are unaware, unable, or for other reasons, do not take advantage of their opportunities to provide input into the planning process on a regular basis. The MPO is aware and committed to rising to the challenge of reaching such citizens and stimulating participatory interest at the grassroots level. A primary goal of the MPO is to provide adequate public notice and sufficient time for public comment at key decision points. This includes outreach efforts for obtaining active public involvement early in the planning and document preparation process.

This report includes the history of public participation by the Charlotte County–Punta Gorda MPO. The plan will discuss and identify the goals, objectives, policies, and procedures relating to public involvement activities and opportunities (both in person and in virtual format). The plan will also outline the assessment and evaluation techniques and concepts to be utilized by the MPO in reaching its constituents. Through these systematic evaluation efforts, the plan will discuss outreach efforts with the goal of improving or adding new public involvement activities wherever possible.

## **What is the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Responsible for?**

1. **Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** – updated every five years, required to address a minimum time horizon of 20 years. The LRTP identifies needed improvements to the transportation network and provides a long-term investment framework that addresses current and future transportation needs. The LRTP must be multimodal and include, at a minimum, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian and transit infrastructure improvements.
2. **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** – identifies transportation projects and priorities that will be pursued over the next five years.
3. **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** – a two-year plan that identifies funding sources for each MPO planning activity and a schedule of activities
4. **Public Participation Plan (PPP)** – provides a framework for public involvement in regard to MPO planning related activities.

The Charlotte County- Punta Gorda MPO places a high value on public involvement. For questions regarding public involvement and to learn more about how you can get involved, contact the MPO Director D’Juan Harris at (941) 883-3535.

## How To Get involved



### CALL US

941.883.3535.  
8:00 am to 4:00 pm • Monday through Friday



### WRITE TO US

Charlotte County – Punta Gorda Metropolitan  
Planning Organization (CCMPO)  
P.O. Box 494469 • Port Charlotte, FL 33949-4469



### EMAIL US

General Inquiries:  
office@ccmpo.com



### VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[www.ccmpo.com](http://www.ccmpo.com)



### COME TO AN EVENT

The MPO participates in events throughout the region and hosts workshops for citizens to team about projects where they work and live. Visit the website to learn more.



### PARTICIPATE IN PERSON

Make a public comment at an MPO Board or committee meeting. Find our calendar of events at [ccmpo.com](http://ccmpo.com)



### WRITE TO US

To serve as a representative on an MPO committee call, write or email the MPO office for more information.



## 2. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE MPO AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



Since its founding in July 1992, the Charlotte County–Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization MPO’s public involvement policy has evolved and expanded to embrace citizen inclusion in all aspects of transportation planning. Throughout 1994, the MPO Board adopted several measures and amendments to its Bylaws to increase public participation opportunities. Throughout the mid and late 1990s, such public involvement concepts as the issuance of press

releases to media outlets on transportation planning issues were established, as well as the establishment of Transportation Fairs with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Of note is the increased participation and improved analytical review of recommendations by the CAC and BPAC to the MPO Board. Increased emphasis on public involvement has been incorporated into the LRTP and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

### a. Charlotte County – Punta Gorda Regional Coordination and Improvement of Public Involvement of the MPOs



It is the intent and goal of this PPP to assure public access and involvement for all joint regional activities, to integrate and build upon these joint regional objectives and to provide complete information, timely public notice and early and continuous access during the transportation process within the four-county area.

The MPO complies with federal and Florida State requirements in addressing public involvement in transportation planning. The MPO meets public involvement requirements set forth in [Federal 23 C.F.R. 450.316 and 23 U.S.C.](#) and [Florida Statutes 339.175. Chapter](#)

[339 \(F.S.\)](#) requires that citizens, public agencies, and other known interested parties be given the opportunity to comment on the Florida Transportation Plan, and to hold public meetings during the development of major transportation improvements.

The [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#) and [Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\)](#) encourage optimization of virtual public involvement technologies and techniques for public participation activities related to metropolitan and statewide transportation planning under the applicable statutes, [23 U.S.C. 134-135.](#)

### 3. THE MPO’S ROLE IN PUBLIC INVOLVMENT — INCLUDING TELECONFERENCES AND ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES



The MPO’s role in public involvement is directed and influenced by Federal, State, and Local laws requirements.

The MPO attempts to provide all interested parties reasonable opportunity to comment on all aspects of the planning process (including the TIP and LRTP) as is required.

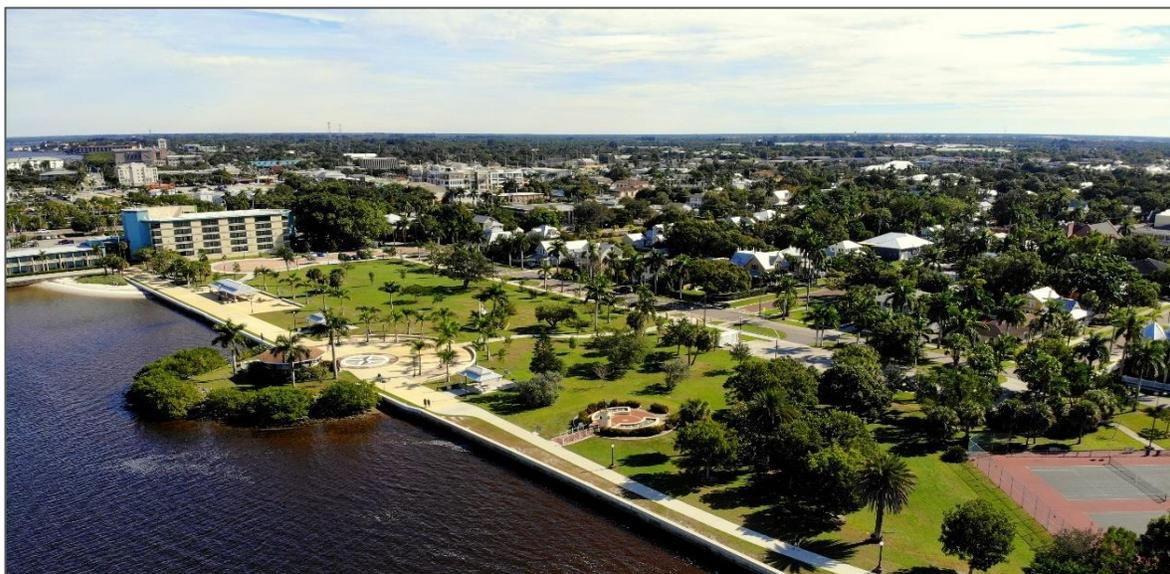
These requirements attempt to encourage a proactive public involvement process with the added goal of supporting early and continuing involvement of the public in the overall planning process.

Additionally, other evaluation, analysis and development plans including Feasibility Studies, FDOT’s Work Plan, median access

and business access plans will follow the requirements and policies as set forth in this plan.

The MPO recognizes that the public has useful opinions, insights, and observations to share with their state and local agencies on the performance and needs of the transportation system and/or on specific projects.

Early and strong public engagement has the potential to accelerate project delivery by helping identify and address public concerns early in the planning process, thereby reducing delays from previously unknown interests late in the project delivery process.



***During the public participation process, the Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO will strive to:***

- ❖ Provide timely information about transportation processes and issues to all interested parties including, but not limited to: citizens; affected public agencies; representatives of public transportation employees; freight shippers; providers of freight transportation services; private providers of transportation; representatives of users of public transportation; pedestrians; bicyclists; and the disabled, opportunities to comment (in person, by mail, telephone, electronically or virtually) This includes the use of visualization techniques to aid in describing and conducting transportation planning processes and products of the MPO process.
- ❖ Make available reasonable public access to policy and technical information utilized in the preparation, development, and adoption of proposed transportation plans, such as the LRTP and TIP. This may include administrative changes proposed by the MPO, including project related roll-forward reports. This access includes fully open public meetings at convenient times and locations when planning issues are being considered at all levels of government. Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities or events, as well as sufficient time for public review and comment at key decision points within the planning process.
- ❖ Provide a summary and analysis if there are a significant number of comments received on any draft transportation plan or document.
- ❖ Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development process.
- ❖ Seek out the needs of those traditionally underserved (environmental justice [EJ] community) by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to, low-income and minority households.
- ❖ Periodically review this PPP in terms of its effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all, through the use of innovative in-person or virtual public involvement techniques.
- ❖ Coordinate with federal (FHWA and FTA) and statewide (FDOT) public information processes, wherever possible, to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduce redundancies and costs.
- ❖ Coordinate to the extent possible, public participation events, meetings and workshops with meetings and events scheduled by other governmental agencies to maximize their input and reduce logistical conflicts.

## *a. Teleconferences and Alternative Public Involvement Strategies*

Public engagement is a critical component in the decision-making process allowing for meaningful consideration and input from interested citizens. The MPO is mindful that it is expected to continue to provide opportunities for public involvement throughout its planning activities and that these activities be proactive, but flexible in meeting public participation plan requirements. The MPO also understands that some public participation plan activities may be delayed or deferred and be replaced with other engagement strategies to ensure that all sectors of the population have an opportunity to participate and to ensure sufficient and appropriate outreach is maintained.

Early, effective, and continuous public involvement brings diverse viewpoints and ideas into the decision-making process and the MPO recognizes that meaningful public involvement can be attained by integrating virtual tools into its public participation approaches.

Video and audio teleconferences also known as virtual meetings or internet teleconferencing will be utilized to allow for a broader segment of the population to participate. These virtual meetings will be consistent with regulatory scheduled or



special in-person meetings and used in lieu of physical in-person meetings. The MPO staff, the MPO Board, the [Citizens' Advisory Committee \(CAC\)](#), the [Technical Advisory Committee \(TAC\)](#), the [Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee \(BPAC\)](#) and the [Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board \(LCB\)](#) will utilize teleconference software applications (such as GoToMeeting and Microsoft Teams) during states of emergency as authorized by the Governor of the State of Florida. These new opportunities for information sharing and public involvement in the transportation planning, programming, and project development process may include, but are not limited to telephone town hall, online meetings, pop-up outreach, social meetings/meeting-in-a box kits, story maps, quick videos, crowdsourcing, survey tools, real-time polling tools, and visualizations.

To this end the MPO will follow guidance to conduct public involvement using communication media technology in a manner consistent with all Federal and State orders and directives including:

- ❖ Recognize the emergency situation calling for alternative public involvement strategies. During this time, meetings will be publicly posted, and public comment will be available by electronic, mail, telephone or virtual means
- ❖ Confirm that virtual tools maintain transparency and access to transportation planning activities that closely replicate in person public involvement opportunities
- ❖ Specify the alternative public involvement strategies to be used, including time periods for public comment and MPO responses to the comments
- ❖ Ensure that the public involvement strategies are inclusive to the extent possible that comply with emergency executive orders to protect public health

The MPO also understands that workplace collaboration software and videoconferencing and messaging functions may have some drawbacks when it comes to virtual public meetings. While the following weaknesses have been identified, the MPO will continue to research and investigate future technological advancements to engage the public during every step of the planning process

- ❖ A significant number of participants and residents with limited internet access often eliminates the option for participants to provide comments
- ❖ Technological barriers to participation occur when there are still residents who may not be comfortable downloading meeting software or navigating the software these tools can provide

Given these risks and the associated negative outcomes possible with virtual meetings and related participant technological prowess, the MPO has developed some guidelines to engage the public by supplementing face-to-face information sharing including:

- ❖ Provide technological and presentation support for multiple remote presenters and participants
- ❖ Provide public comment opportunities
- ❖ Allow and improve upon citizen participation with ease-of-use login, password, or download access formats
- ❖ Provide access for residents with limited internet access the ability to call into meetings
- ❖ Support an unlimited number of virtual public participants where practical
- ❖ Provide online, text or phone-based survey and polling tools, including private comment options at MPO workshops and other virtual public involvement forums.

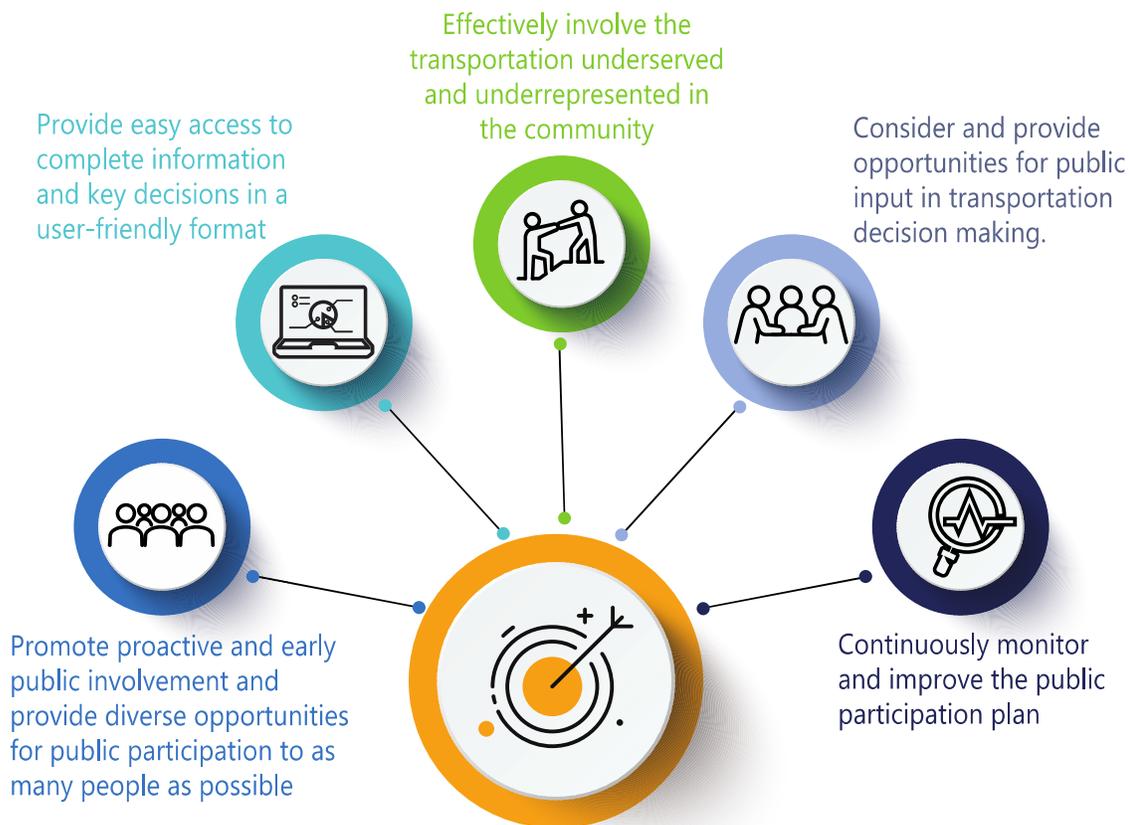
Below is a graphic of the MPO's Conceptual Framework goals and promises for public participation.

## The Spectrum of Public Participation — Conceptual Framework



## 4. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES INCLUDING FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND TITLE VI LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) REQUIREMENTS

On August 11, 2000, President Clinton signed the Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, to clarify Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Subsequent US Department of Transportation (DOT) guidance explicitly identifies MPOs as organizations that must follow Limited English Proficiency (LEP) guidelines in order to continue receiving federal financial assistance in any form (Appendix V). The intent of the MPO’s LEP Plan is to ensure access to the planning process and information published by the MPO where it is determined that a very small number of residents (approximately 1%) in the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda planning area do not speak or read English proficiently.



Inclusive public participation is a priority consideration in the MPO planning process including MPO plans, studies, and programs. The MPO must and will ensure that all segments of the population including LEP persons have the opportunity to be involved in any MPO sponsored public participation opportunity. As new Census data becomes available the MPO will monitor changes in the LEP population and adjust its LEP policy

accordingly. If warranted in the future, the MPO will consider the feasibility of public participation techniques to reach the LEP population.

These techniques and concepts include:

- ❖ the translation of key elements of the MPO web site, including future public participation opportunities
- ❖ the pursuit of other user-friendly multi-lingual software applications compatible with the web content management systems currently used by the MPO and
- ❖ the translation of executive summaries for key MPO documents such as the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and this Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Notifications including newspaper advertisements, meeting place signage, or public outreach materials distributed at public participation events will also be considered for translation. All translated public participation materials will be user-friendly, appealing, and easy to understand.

**To meet these goals, the MPO is committed to providing:**

- ❖ Early and continuous public involvement
- ❖ Inclusionary practices in activities and notification
- ❖ Consideration of the needs of the traditionally under-served
- ❖ Collaboration with other agencies, local governments, private sector transportation entities, and non-MPO officials
- ❖ Convenient meeting times and locations
- ❖ Reasonable access to information
- ❖ Timely notice of public involvement activities, including appropriate review and comment periods
- ❖ Acknowledgment and consideration of public comments

***Furtherance to these goals, it is the intent and will be the practice of the MPO to conduct an open and accessible planning process that:***

- ❖ Meets federal, state, and local requirements, including the rapid implementation of new legislation, and guidelines as it relates to future public participation directives.
- ❖ Is proactive, clear, and concise in identifying areas with concentrations of minority, young families and the economically disadvantaged.
- ❖ All meeting sites will be centrally located, handicapped accessible, and have audio/visual equipment on location to facilitate and embellish project or proposal descriptions.
- ❖ Provide a variety of mechanisms to solicit participation and involvement including easy-to-use virtual public participation techniques and training support efforts to allow citizens to access and comment on all public meetings.
- ❖ Uses a variety of outlets to increase public awareness and increase attendance at MPO sponsored meetings and events. All MPO public participation events are posted on the MPO website including all public meetings, planning documents, maps, and MPO staff contact information.
- ❖ Analyzes and reviews all comments received from all formats including communication media technology.
- ❖ Provides “early and often” input opportunities in the development of major transportation planning documents, policy issues and project proposals.
- ❖ Has on-going communication between MPO staff and the community-at-large through well organized and open meetings including clearly written and accessible reports, meeting agenda items, meeting minutes, and programs through their completion and implementation.
- ❖ Uses all forms of media including the internet to reach out to the widest audience.
- ❖ Attempts to honor requests for information and meeting notices in other languages, when given 10 business days advance notice of such requests.
- ❖ Ensures that the views of those traditionally underserved by transportation and their organizations are solicited.

**The Public Participation Plan (PPP) 3-step Outreach Process and Conceptual Framework Goals and Objectives:**



This process is based on the understanding that:

- ❖ Participation levels will vary
- ❖ Some individuals and groups don't realize that they have a stake
- ❖ Different interests are motivated to participate at different stages of the process
- ❖ The Charlotte County–Punta Gorda MPO's PPP needs to be flexible enough for all changing situations and conditions
- ❖ The Charlotte County Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) is a critical link to the public participation

**MPO Policies:**

Federal law requires that the public involvement process be proactive and provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement. A key provision requires that all MPOs develop and utilize a PPP that will provide a 45-day comment period for all interested parties. All public involvement activities whether conducted in person or by virtual methods will adhere to the following set of requirements and guidelines:

- ❖ Provide a 30-day public comment period, if feasible, and advertise at least once in a local newspaper detailing public meetings, or public participation opportunities including opportunities to comment and express opinions on the LRTP and TIP. The MPO's website will also post all opportunities for public comment to meet these guidelines.

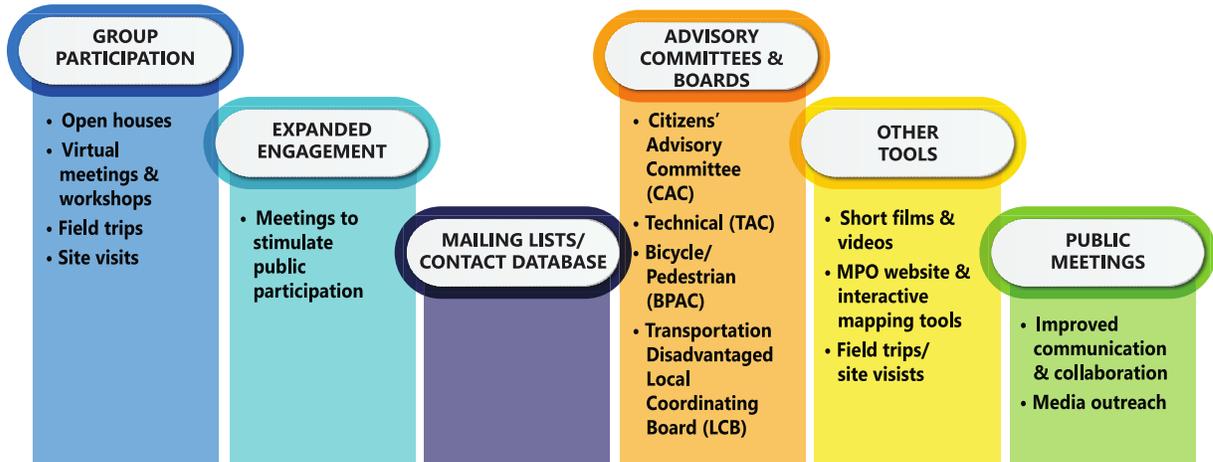
- ❖ For LRTP and TIP amendments, the MPO will strive to meet the 30-day public comment period, although there may be exceptions to this comment period for these amendments as meeting schedules, funding timetables, agency guidance, and contractor scheduling may be such that project delays could result in not meeting the public comment period notice guidelines.
- ❖ Hold public meetings on proposed adoption of the LRTP and TIP.
- ❖ Provide timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes including the use of virtual meeting/communication technology.
- ❖ Employ visualization techniques to describe the LRTP and TIP.
- ❖ Make public participation, related technical information and meeting notices available through accessible means and formats. These include the World Wide Web and electronic mail.
- ❖ Hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, including the scheduling of virtual meetings.
- ❖ Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system, such as low income and minority households (environmental justice population).
- ❖ Include public participation activities that ensure equality among all citizens. The MPO is committed to the concept of Environmental Justice (EJ) [Executive Order (EO) 12898] and will ensure that the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process. This includes public participation consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Demographic data review and analysis will be performed when proposed plans and proposals could impact EJ populations. Public participation plans that promote access to public information and scheduled events for minority and low-income communities will be developed.
- ❖ Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the LRTP and TIP. All revisions to the LRTP and TIP will always include procedures consistent with this PPP. During TIP and LRTP Development, the MPO will provide public participation opportunities to public agencies, users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, freight shippers, freight transportation services, private providers of transportation and users of public transit.
- ❖ Include a summary of significant comments received on the draft LRTP and TIP as part of the final document. This includes periodic reviews of the LRTP by MPO Boards, their Advisory Committees, and the public during the preparation of the document, interim tasks and final draft plan preparation.
- ❖ Continue to prepare a list of project priorities for FDOT review, by October 1 of each year. The list will continue to be reviewed by the MPO’s TAC and CAC Advisory Committees before approval by the MPO Board and submittal to FDOT.
- ❖ Compile an annual listing for public review, of projects for which Federal

funds have been obligated in the preceding year.

- ❖ Periodically review the [FDOT MPO Program Management Handbook](#) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines, including virtual public involvement initiatives for additional requirements, authority, Plan development and activities.
- ❖ Make readily available the TIP and LRTP for public review in hard copy, electronically accessible formats and readily obtained on its website.
- ❖ Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the PPP to ensure a full and open process including adherence to all aspects of [Florida’s Government in the Sunshine Law \(F.S. 286.011\)](#).
- ❖ Adhere to the [“Jessica Lunsford Act” \(F.S. 1012.465\)](#). This Act requires background checks of all persons entering school grounds when children are present. The MPO will consult the Charlotte County Legal Department before planning to hold any meeting or public participation event on school property.
- ❖ Ensure project documents are available in written and electronic formats.
- ❖ Provide a copy of MPO related planning material including meetings, plans, proposals and public participation events via US mail to anyone who requests a copy within seven (7) days of the meeting to ensure delivery and review time for recipients.
- ❖ When available and feasible, PowerPoint presentations will also be posted on-line to provide the public with a more reader-friendly way to learn about the project.



## 5. DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ELEMENTS



### a. Mailing Lists/Contact Database

The MPO will maintain a reasonably current and up-to-date database of individuals and agencies to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and provide their input.

All meeting announcements, as well as public workshops, public meetings, and specific



public information and input meeting are placed on the website as soon as dates are finalized. E-mail notifications of meetings and workshops are sent to MPO Committee members and interested citizens to further improve participation and input.

The MPO continues to seek more public participation from the traditionally underserved community. The MPO continually discusses with minority and younger aged citizens contact opportunities the MPO could use to increase public participation of this age group.

The MPO is responsive to any and all citizen requests for meeting agendas, meeting minutes and any other MPO prepared planning document. These requests are sent electronically or by mail when requested. The MPO is also cognizant that many MPO staffed Board and Committee members and their constituency do not have access to e-mail. These members are notified of public participation events through more traditional agenda packet, mailing, and telephone contact methods.

### ***b. Meetings to Stimulate Public Participation***

Various meeting types will provide the MPO with opportunities for early and continuous input into the transportation planning process. The MPO has always and will continue to hold public meetings leading to the adoption of the LRTP and TIP. All parties interested in attending and commenting on these planning documents are encouraged to

do so, including citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, pedestrian walkways, bicycle transportation facilities and the disabled.

### ***c. Open Houses/Workshops/Virtual Meetings and Workshops***

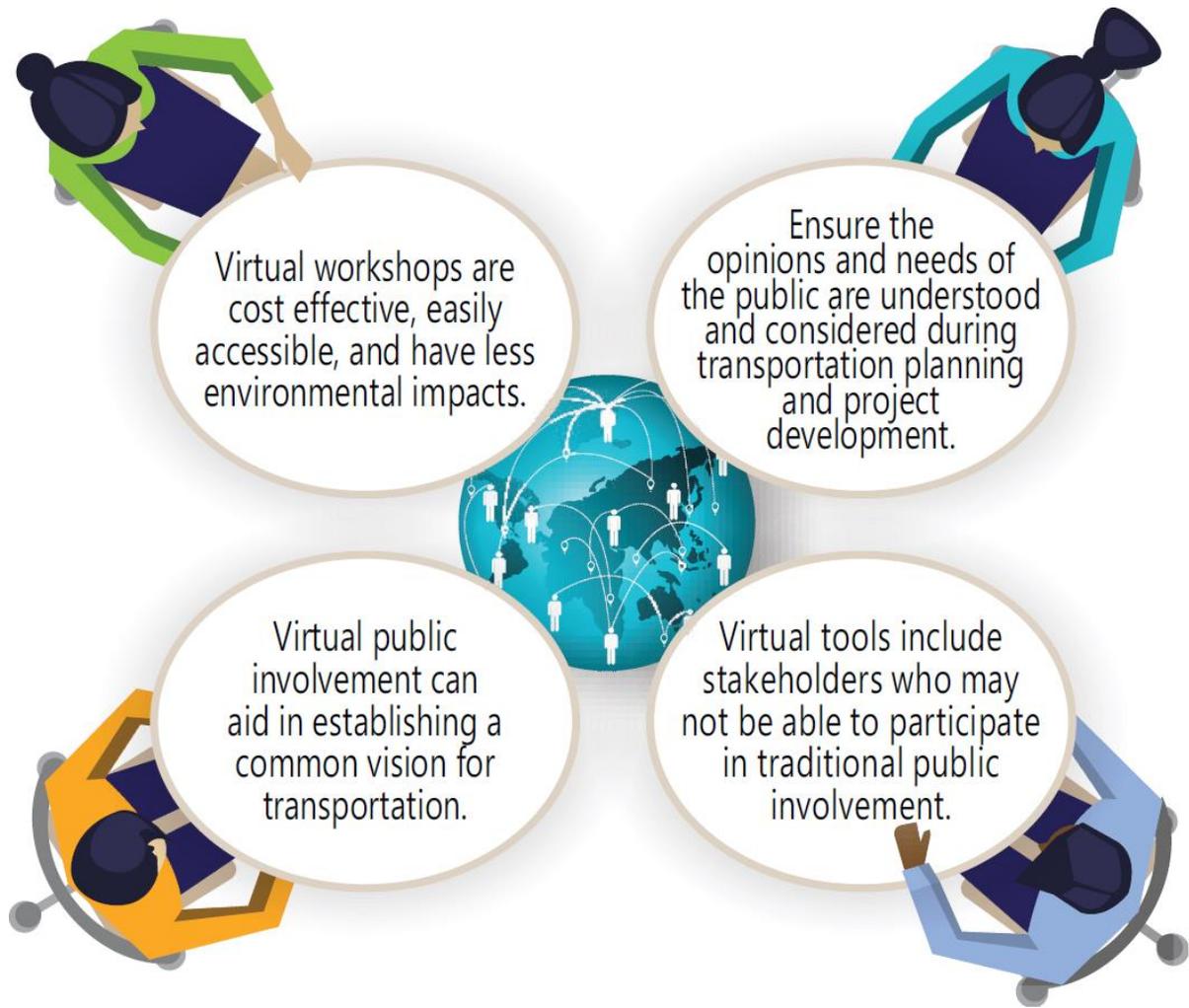
An open house or workshop is a forum where people receive information and provide input about a transportation plan or project. Workshop forums have worked well for the MPO where citizens receive information and explanations about a plan or project on a one-to-one or small group interaction basis. Attendees glean information from displays and exhibits and from talking to MPO staff or their

consultants. In this type of forum, citizens often express their comment and concerns in writing on “Evaluation/Comment Forms” ([Appendix I](#)).

Innovative virtual public involvement techniques with a platform to inform the public and receive feedback will be used when in-person workshop forums cannot be utilized. These new opportunities for virtual information sharing and public involvement in the transportation planning, programming, and project development process may include, but are not limited to telephone town halls, online meetings, pop-up outreach, social meetings/meeting-in-a box kits, online mapping tools, short videos, survey tools and real-time polling tools.



**Benefits to using virtual workshops include:**



**Procedures the MPO will utilize to ensure the MPO meets current Federal and State requirements related to virtual public involvement include:**

**a. Field Trips/Site Visits**

Many proposed actions look very different when people are actually out in the field looking at the issue or situation. It is one



thing to discuss impacts when they are an abstraction or an image in peoples’ heads, and quite another to engage with the actual reality on the ground. The key point is that citizens build mental concepts on what the impact of a project will be and then, participate in public participation forums based on those images. Field trips provide an opportunity for people to match their mental images to the reality of the actual situation.

**b. Short Films and Videos**

The MPO has made short videos MPO short video first screened in February 2020 in support if the 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)) and will continue to utilize the services and professional staff of CC-TV-20-Charlotte County’s government access television station. The station provides viewers access to MPO Board Meetings; Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meetings; Punta Gorda City Council meetings; other civic meetings; Special documentaries and timely news-magazine stories along with local, state, and national satellite programming. The MPO also utilizes

rolling message scripts on this station to recruit representatives for vacant LCB Board and CAC and BPAC Committee seats, as well as announce opportunities to attend public involvement events.



### **c. Public Meetings**



Generally, MPO public meetings are more structured than the open house/workshop public participation format. The MPO will use either in-person or a virtual format when an emergency necessitates the need to meet specific MPO objectives. A formal agenda will be prepared to structure the topics to be covered and to provide live input from the attending participants. Roll call votes required of the MPO Board for adoption of the Long-Range

Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), including any amendments, will be conducted and placed in the public record. Documents/policies to be adopted are made available in public libraries and are available on the MPO website.

The MPO also uses public meetings to help understand and monitor community reaction and support to transportation planning proposals. This in turn aids the MPO in diminishing public controversy and misunderstandings. The MPO has observed that public meetings have resulted in citizens proposing viable solutions to solve complex transportation planning issues, as well as offering “average citizen” concerns.

### **d. Notices for Public Meetings, Workshops, and Public Participation Events**

All MPO-generated meeting notices and announcements will describe the meeting purpose, sponsor, time, place, and answer the questions of who, what, when, where and how. All MPO Board Meetings, Advisory Committees, public workshops, public meetings and any special meetings called by the MPO, or informational or educational purposes held within the community for presenting plans, gathering public input and public participation shall

generate notices of public meeting by the MPO. The MPO website will also be used to promote regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications, and work products such as the TIP, and the LRTP. Additionally, the MPO will continue to publicize all MPO Board, MPO Advisory Committee Meetings and all special meetings, including all public meetings, and public workshops on the transportation planning process.

### e. Meeting Agendas

An agenda sets the course for a meeting and attempts to inform attendees of the topics and concepts to be discussed, and the progression of these topics.

Opportunities are provided for public participation in these agendas and include the opportunity for members to suggest new topics and issues to be presented and discussed at the next meeting.

All MPO Board and Advisory Committee Agendas and meeting packets including meeting minutes will be posted on the MPO website.

Staff virtual workplace collaborative efforts have demonstrated that the use of a virtual meeting presenter can greatly improve the flow, participant understanding and effectiveness of these meetings.

The presenter, an MPO staff member, reviews ground rules, works remotely to display the current agenda item being discussed on screen throughout the meeting, providing on-screen information as questions arise and advance/reverse informational slides to allow for a more concise and effective presentation.

### f. Information (MPO Website and Interactive Mapping Tools)

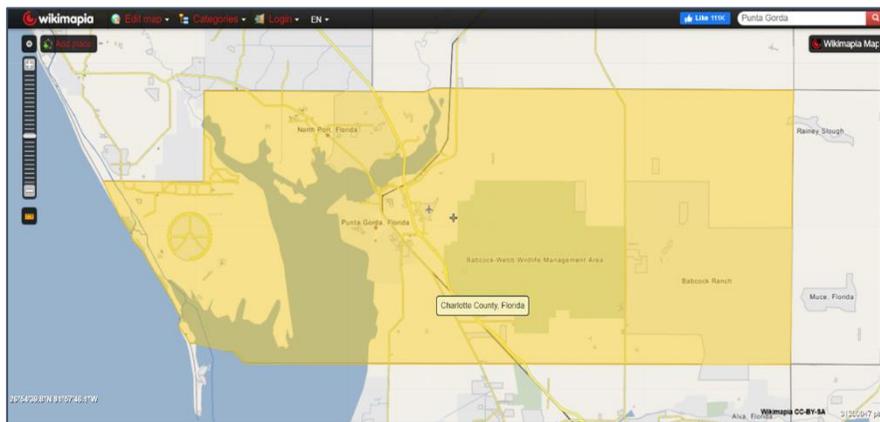
In the ever-expanding information age, the use of the internet, electronic mail and fax machines are routinely used to reach the public. The MPO continually revises and strives to improve its website for users to easily and quickly find MPO related information and planning activities.

Easy to navigate dropdown menus including archived and recent meeting agenda packets, meeting minutes, the MPO event calendar, and a revised set of federal, state, and local transportation planning links. Also posted are the most current

planning documents including the annually updated TIP, the 2045 LRTP, and related amendments. With the advent of the use of virtual meeting formats beginning in April 2020, the MPO provides audio and visual meeting access

links for website visitors to utilize in accessing software for remote meetings. This virtual communication format will continue to play an increasing role in future public involvement outreach efforts including annual TIP and 2045 LRTP development.

Google Earth maps are utilized on the “Contact Us—Connect with Us” dropdown menu to aid users in pinpointing the location of their concerns and comments to better aid MPO staff in understanding the issue or concern.



Since 2017 and in conjunction with the preparation of the Charlotte County Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, the MPO has used interactive mapping tools as an electronic public engagement tool. Wikimapia is a privately owned open-content collaborative mapping project that utilizes an interactive, clickable web map with a geographically referenced system. The data in Wikimapia and similar techniques is derived from voluntary crowdsourcing. All users are allowed to add a place on the Wikimap layer. Using a simple graphical

editing tool, users are able to draw an outline or polygon that matches the satellite image layer underneath. Each object or tag has specific information fields which include categories, a textual description, street address, and a related map-based link. Users are likewise capable of uploading several relevant photos. Interactive mapping tools public involvement will be used to solicit public opinion to target specific areas and locations for inclusion in the MPO's 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

### ***g. Media Outreach***

Media outreach is a continuing activity by the MPO staff to keep the public informed and updated about the MPO and its projects and milestones.

The MPO strives to encourage the media to highlight transportation issues and to increase public awareness of the transportation planning process. As needed, media briefings have been and continue to be conducted to update the media regarding the transportation planning process and in response to media requests for interviews. The MPO will participate in this media outlet whenever possible to inform the



public of the MPO's role in the transportation planning process and to inform the public on opportunities to participate in the MPO planning process.

To facilitate improved access for County residents and coordination with County related planning functions MPO Board meetings are videotaped and shown twice a week on the local government access television station (Comcast Channel 20). The MPO anticipates increased public involvement, and participation in response to these public access improvements and will monitor and evaluate their effectiveness and target improvements and enhancements.

### ***h. Citizens' Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committees and Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (LCB)***

These boards and committees provide a public perspective to the MPO process and strives to represent public views to the MPO Board. As part of the MPO structure, the role played in the public participation process by the CAC, TAC, BPAC, and LCB cannot be underemphasized, as they provide the link between the MPO Board and the community's citizens. These committees are a critical link in aiding the MPO to meet the goals and objectives outlined in this plan.

All MPO planning documents including the TIP and LRTP are presented to the

CAC, TAC, BPAC, and LCB as formal agenda items during regularly scheduled meetings for their information, consideration, endorsement, support and input.

All advisory committee and board meetings either in-person or virtual are open to the public and can be accessed using audio and visual links provided on the MPO website. Citizens are encouraged to contact the MPO for help in accessing any virtual or in-person meeting and public participation event scheduled.

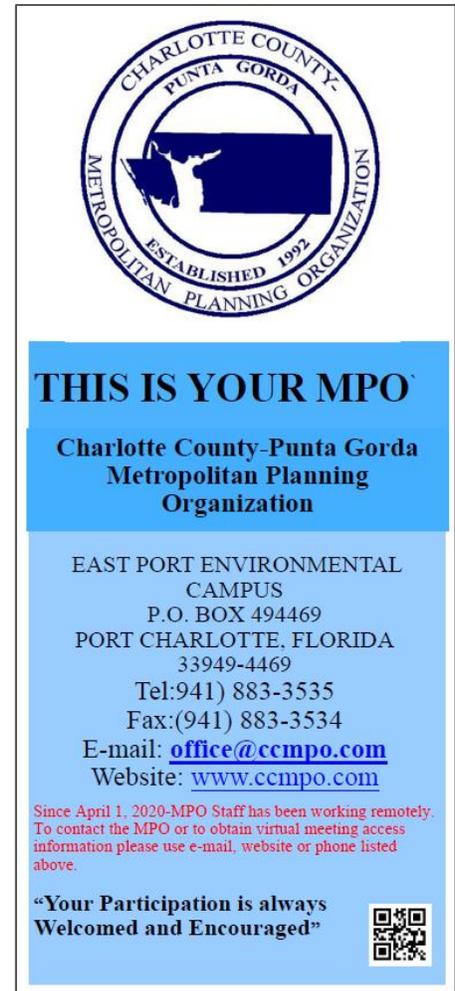
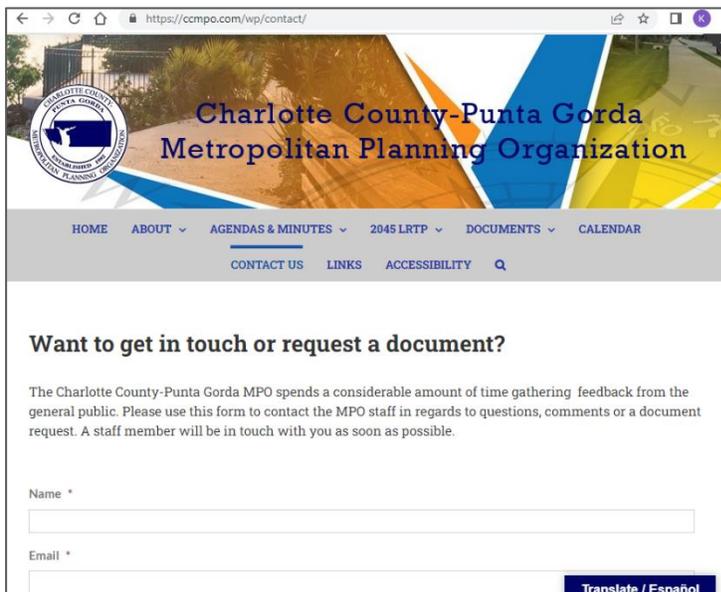


### ***i. Written and Electronic Forms of Communication including Brochures, and Evaluation/Comment Forms***

The MPO updates its two informational brochures on a regular basis. “This is Your MPO” describes the MPO’s overall function and responsibilities and the “Charlotte County Bicycle/Pedestrian Map” displays the existing bike and pedestrian sidewalks and trails within the County.

The most common and in many cases the most effective way for the public in general to relate their ideas and input is through written comments. Public comments can help build an understanding of community issues, which must be considered in designing transportation solutions that fit community needs.

Additionally, the information gleaned from public comments can serve as an excellent record for future project phases.



### ***j. Public Participation Techniques and Performance Measures of Effectiveness (MOE)***

Federal legislation requires that MPOs periodically review the effectiveness of their public involvement process. All MPOs are mandated by law to focus on

performance objectives and measures. The MPO has identified five (5) objectives to ensure that the mobility needs of the community are addressed.



## 6. CONCLUSION

Public input offers the MPO an opportunity to understand a community's values so it can better seek to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts from agency decisions. This PPP addresses the MPO's public involvement practices during decision-making and program implementation activities. The fundamental premise of this plan is that, in all of its programs, the MPO recognizes that it is vital to provide for meaningful public involvement, whether in an in-person or virtual format. Openness to the public furthers the MPO's mission by increasing its credibility and improving agency decision making.

The guidelines and tactics outlined in this PPP will be implemented for all MPO planning activities. This document also provides guidance and tools to comply with federal and state statutes and regulations under Title VI, including environmental justice (EJ), limited English proficiency (LEP) and the Florida Sunshine Law.

The MPO continues and is certainly willing to remain open to new ideas from stakeholders, and to incorporate them where appropriate. The MPO remains cognizant of its mission of providing plans and an environment where a safe, efficient, cost-effective transportation system can flourish in Charlotte County.

## **7. APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I**

[Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Public Engagement Survey](#)

### **APPENDIX II**

[Acronyms](#)

### **APPENDIX III**

[Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization and Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization Joint Regional Public Involvement Process Component](#)

### **APPENDIX IV**

[Regional Public Involvement Plan Between the Lee County and Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO's](#)

### **APPENDIX V**

[TITLE VI PROGRAM Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO](#)

[Appendix A – Title VI/Nondiscrimination Assurance](#)

[Appendix B – MPO Organizational Chart](#)

[Appendix C – Title VI Program Activity Log](#)