

# Public Participation and Civil Rights Plan



Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO

*March 2019*



This Public Participation Plan (PPP) is intended to be used by individuals responsible for engaging the public in the Mississippi Gulf Coast's metropolitan planning process (i.e., local elected officials, MPO, LPA and consultant staff, councils, commissioners, or committee members).

It is a guide for implementing effective and meaningful public participation activities that engage the public to help make decisions and develop community plans and programs that will shape how we move on the Coast.

The PPP also provides information to the public on what to expect, where to find planning information and guidance on how to become more involved in the transportation planning process.

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#### NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTIFICATION:

GRPC prohibits discrimination in all of its programs, services and activities. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or other protected status. Persons who require assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the MPO at least five (5) business days prior to the any scheduled meeting, event or the end of a public review and comment period. Contact Stephanie Plancich at 228-864-1167 or by email to [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com) with any requests, questions or comments.

#### NOTATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

This document was prepared and published by Gulf Regional Planning Commission, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in cooperation with or with financial assistance from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). Assistance notwithstanding, the contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official view or policies of the funding agencies.

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW:

In compliance with federal regulation 23 CFR 450 and the FTA public participation requirements of the Section 5307 POP notice, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) sought public input in the development of this public participation plan (PPP) from 2/15/2019 through 3/31/2019. Copies of outreach materials and photos are in Appendix G.

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## Part 1: Public Participation Plan

### of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization

Urban transportation planning, as we know it, was formalized as a federal requirement in the Federal Aid Act of 1962 in conjunction with the development of the national highway system. The Act made having “a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive planning process” in every urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000 people a requirement. Many communities did not have the planning experience or capability to carry out this new process, so Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) emerged to fulfill the new responsibilities within the designated planning area.

In the 1970’s, the MPO role began to shift from long-range visioning to include short-range planning that was responsive to local needs and priorities. This decade placed more focus on congestion management as an alternative to new construction. Public concerns and their involvement in program development resulted in the integration of environmental and energy considerations into the planning process.

In the 1980’s, a complete revision of transportation planning regulations occurred as a measure to limit federal influence on the local decision-making process. It was in the new law, the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1982, that MPOs were required to develop and manage a metropolitan long-range plan, transportation improvement program of projects and a unified planning work program to align federally funded transportation investments with local goals and objectives.

That transportation bill was replaced by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), which clarified the role of the MPO into what it is today: [a decision-making body made up of local elected officials and transportation stakeholders responsible for implementing the metropolitan planning process with a focus on intermodal planning with consideration of land use, environmental, energy, economic and social impacts](#). MPO planning documents are developed in coordination with statewide planning efforts and must comply with all applicable policies, executive orders and regulations.

Since ISTEA, there have been five more enacted transportation bills, all of which expanded the MPO’s planning requirements, set new planning standards and/or included changes in performance objectives, but the purpose of the MPO as a support for the local community has remained constant. The other transportation bills are:

- The National Highway Designation Act (NHS), 1995
- Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), 1998
- Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: Legacy for all Users (SAFETEA-LU), 2005
- Moving Ahead for Progress in 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21), 2012
- Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), 2015 [Current](#)

# MS Gulf Coast MPO

On December 20, 1973, Governor Waller designated Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We currently serve two planning areas; the Gulfport-Biloxi Transportation Management Area (TMA) and the Pascagoula Urbanized Area (UZA).

*UZA's are an urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000. Every UZA must have a designated MPO. TMA's are urbanized areas with a population over 200,000. These areas require additional planning effort and the planning process is jointly audited and certified by the Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations every four years.*

Together, our planning area includes 15 jurisdictions: the 12 cities of Waveland, Bay St. Louis, Diamondhead, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Gulfport, Biloxi, Gautier, Pascagoula, Moss Point, D'Iberville and Ocean Springs, as well as Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties. Members of the MPO include elected officials from each jurisdiction as well as other stakeholders including transportation providers, managers of major modes, advocates for alternative modes, local, state and federal partners.

The MPO is coordinated, housed and staffed by GRPC. The agency provides support that is necessary for the MPO to meet its obligations to the region. GRPC's professional staff is skilled in the varied applications of transportation planning theory and practice, including:

- ✓ Grant writing and management
- ✓ Program development and administration
- ✓ Data collection and analysis of land use and census data
- ✓ GIS development and mapping
- ✓ Traffic counts and travel demand modeling
- ✓ Urban and regional comprehensive and mitigation planning
- ✓ Transit development and planning
- ✓ Public engagement, education and outreach coordination
- ✓ Transportation planning and management particularly regarding congestion management, roadway safety, alternative transportation systems, air quality conformity and regional goods movement

## MPO Organization

As noted above, the MPO is staffed by the employees at Gulf Regional Planning Commission. They coordinate MPO activities, monitor the daily operations of the planning program, provide guidance to MPO members and inform them of changes to regulations and requirements. In short, the staff ensure that the MPO complies with all applicable regulations and facilitates activities designed to meet regional goals and objectives set by the members. Final decision-making falls on the local elected officials, and transportation stakeholders that make up the policy committee. The MPO is guided by three committees:

The Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) is a group that represents the general interests of the community. They are interested individuals and representatives of target population groups traditionally absent from the decision-making process. The CAC reviews and discusses proposed plans and programs of the MPO and provides feedback and guidance to the voting members. They are engaged early and continuously.

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) consists of individuals whose skills, training and professional status qualify them to take an active role in helping to shape and to oversee the region's transportation planning process. The TCC reviews all draft documents, policies, programs, etc. and makes recommendations



to the Policy Committee for revision and adoption. This group is technically experienced and well-versed in transportation planning and project development.

The Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) is made up of elected officials representing all 15 member jurisdictions, as well as directors and managers of other organizations and stakeholder agencies. This group is the decision-making body of the MPO. They review plans and programs, consider public input as well as the recommendations of the CAC and TCC, then vote to adopt final deliverables. Examples include this public participation plan, the metropolitan transportation plan, the transportation improvement program, unified planning work program as well as setting performance targets, regional policies and other guidance materials followed by the MPO staff and membership.

## MPO Planning Documents

### *Public Participation Plan (PPP)*

*Public Review Requirements: 45 days for updates and for amendments*

The **PPP** applies to all services, activities and programs of the agency. The PPP defines the process we follow to provide community members, transportation providers, users and other stakeholders with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. Development guidance is outlined in 23 CFR 450.316 (Appendix C).

This PPP combines our Public Participation and Civil Rights Plans. Applicable non-discrimination regulations predominantly affect when, where, how and who the MPO must involve in its outreach efforts. By combining the outreach and compliance guidance into one document, we have provided one comprehensive guide to accomplish agency communication, education, participation and awareness activities.

Finally, it is important to note that Coast Transit Authority utilizes the participation portion of this PPP to meet their federal requirements for public engagement. the regional transit chapter contains CTA information that is reviewed and updated as part of the regular plan evaluation process. FTA has slightly different non-discrimination reporting and plan development requirements, so CTA maintains a separate Title VI plan to guide those activities of their organization.

### *Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*

*Public Review Requirements: 45 days for updates, 10 days for amendments*

The MS Gulf Coast **MTP** maps out our region's transportation investment strategy for the next 25 years. It is a long-range framework for a balanced transportation system that promotes livability, sustainability, mobility and accessibility. The MTP demonstrates our region's commitment to multi-modal investment that supports continued enhancements to the roadway, public transit, freight movement, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and smart growth policies.

In an effort to elicit widespread and meaningful input for the MTP, staff works closely with planning consultants to implement a comprehensive outreach strategy that encourages participation of the community and aligns with the larger statewide plan development and engagement processes.

The MTP development process typically takes about 18 months to complete. The public is engaged from kick-off to adoption. Final approval is given by MDOT, FHWA and FTA and our MTP is then incorporated into the statewide long-range transportation plan (LRTP).

## *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*

*Public Review Requirements: 45 days for updates, 10 days for amendments*

The **TIP** is a list of selected transportation projects that have been allocated to receive federal transportation funds over a four year period. It is updated every two years, reviewed quarterly and amended as needed. The Mississippi Gulf Coast TIP is developed by the MPO in cooperation with state and local leadership. It must be consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in the MTP.

MPO staff coordinate a call for projects and the initial review of TIP project applications which results in a list of viable projects to be considered by the MPO membership. The CAC and TCC review and provide feedback on the initial list which results in a draft TIP made available for general public review and comment. Barring any significant changes to the draft, the TPC will vote to adopt it as final. With their approval, it goes to MDOT, FHWA and FTA for final adoption and inclusion in the statewide program (STIP).

## *The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)*

*Public Review Requirements: None required before MPO adoption*

The **UPWP** is a document that describes the specific work tasks that will be performed by GRPC/MPO staff, Coast Transit Authority (CTA), and the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) over the next two fiscal years.

The document contains detailed information about who will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products and deliverables, proposed funding allocations, and the source of funds. The UPWP is developed prior to each two year work cycle and is modified as needed.

## *Technical Studies*

*Public Review Requirements: 21 days prior to finalization*

In addition to **studies** funded through the MPO TIP process, staff occasionally undertake technical studies on a variety of transportation topics including Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) and operations planning, the Congestion Management Process (CMP), safety planning, freight planning, bicycle and pedestrian mobility planning, High Occupancy Vehicle and Congestion Pricing, circulation and feasibility studies, corridor and intersection assessments, as well as various areas of transportation research and analysis. General notice of the opportunity to view draft documents is published in a local paper, and targeted outreach is conducted to community members and businesses in the immediate area with invitation to one public meeting.

### **Listing of Obligated Projects**

Each year MDOT provides the MPO with a list of all federal funds obligated through the planning process in the preceding program year. This list includes new projects receiving funding, as well as revised totals to reflect actual project expenses and/or funding increases approved by the MPO. In compliance with public notice requirements outlined in 23 USC 450.314(a), the MPO updates their list of obligated projects within 90 days of the end of the fiscal year and posts the information at [www.grpc.com](http://www.grpc.com).

# MPO Document Changes

There are three types of changes that occur to MPO documents. A full update involves a complete revision, addition or deletion of a major component of the document. Updates include an extensive public involvement process since core components, investment allocations, policies and procedures are being evaluated. Updates take place over several months and include a combination of electronic and in-person participation opportunities. At least one meeting is required in each county, more are planned to meet the needs of affected target populations, prior to adoption by the TPC.

Amendments are a material adjustment to one or more elements of the planning document. For example:

- Addition or deletion of a project to the TIP or MTP
- Any adjustment to the PPP above a minor modification
- Major changes in design or scope, such as changes that impact travel demand models or an approved air quality conformity analysis (i.e. travel lanes, etc.)
- Termini changes that will affect additional community members
- Financial changes in a project's federal funds greater than 20% of the current apportionment

The public has complete opportunity to review proposed amendments and provide comments to the MPO. Amendment periods do not typically include public meetings, but targeted outreach is completed whenever warranted or required to ensure affected populations have opportunity to participate.

Administrative modifications are changes that do not distort fiscal constraint or another core component. Modifications are processed by the MPO staff and do not require public review. Examples include:

- Correcting obvious minor data entry errors
- Splitting or combining projects without modifying the original project design, concept or scope
- Clarifying a description that does not alter program activities, original design, concept or scope
- Moving a project from one federal funding category to another federal funding category
- Changing a project or programs funding source
- Shifting the schedule of a project or phase within the years covered by the TIP
- Adding project funds under 20% of original TIP allocation amount
- Moving a project from previous years forward into the new TIP
- Adding projects within any of the MPO set-aside groups, provided fiscal constraint is maintained
- Other action where re-demonstration of fiscal constraint is not required

## Administrative Modifications Process

MPO staff will submit a letter from the MPO to MDOT showing the modifications made to the TIP and request that it be included in the STIP. The letter should include a copy of the new TIP page with the modified items. All project changes will be tracked in Appendix B of the TIP.

## Transit Project Changes

If the TIP change includes transit projects, then the amendment or modification will need to be approved by both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Staff will submit a letter to both agencies, as well as MDOT, showing the proposed changes and alerting them of any related public review periods. At the end of the review period, a final copy will be sent to each agency.

## MDOT Project Changes

MDOT will provide a written request for changes to be made to the MTP or TIP that advises the MPO if the change should be processed as a modification or amendment. In the event the change is to be processed as an amendment, an MDOT representative should provide explanation of the need and impact of the change for MPO member consideration prior to submitting the change for public review and inclusion in MPO documents.



## Providing Public Notice

MPO planning documents must be developed in consultation with affected public agencies, transportation providers, user representatives, advocates and interested parties. Public participation in all regular activities of the MPO is encouraged through various means. Additional effort to engage community members is undertaken with the development or revision of MPO planning documents.

Below is a guide for how the MPO ensures that the interested public and transportation stakeholders have reasonable opportunity to be involved in plan and program activities. These participation guidelines apply to all documents and events coordinated by the MPO, including the development of the MTP, TIP and this PPP.

Guidance	Strategy
Establish early and continuous public involvement opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A participation calendar is drafted for plan updates, and is made known to MPO members and stakeholders through a variety of methods including; email, meeting agendas, web notices, and social media posts</li> <li>• Development task descriptions and public involvement opportunities are built into the calendar</li> </ul>
Provide adequate notice of public participation activities and timing of the public review and comment period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All plan and program updates, new documents and amendments are announced to the public through a legal notice in the local newspaper(s)</li> <li>• Additional notice is made at MPO meetings, on the GRPC website and Facebook page</li> <li>• Targeted outreach to specific groups and populations is conducted when appropriate</li> </ul>
<p>Provide timely notice</p> <p>Reasonable access to information, and</p> <p>Opportunity to comment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal notice includes the dates of review period and/or meeting dates, methods to submit questions and comments, and an ADA accommodations policy statement</li> <li>• At least two legal notices are published for review periods. One of which must allow interested persons at least 5 business days to request assistance to participate.</li> <li>• One legal notice is published at least 5 days before any public meeting, then a display ad is published the day of the event.</li> <li>• Comments can be submitted through a variety of means, published in public notices</li> <li>• Length of review periods vary based on the type of planning update. Full updates require 45 days (30 days for CTA documents), MPO funded studies are 21 days, amendments are 10 days.</li> </ul>
Employ visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether online or in person, maps, posters, and other display materials are produced and provided for public review and comment.</li> <li>• Each TIP page includes a map and description of the project location</li> </ul>

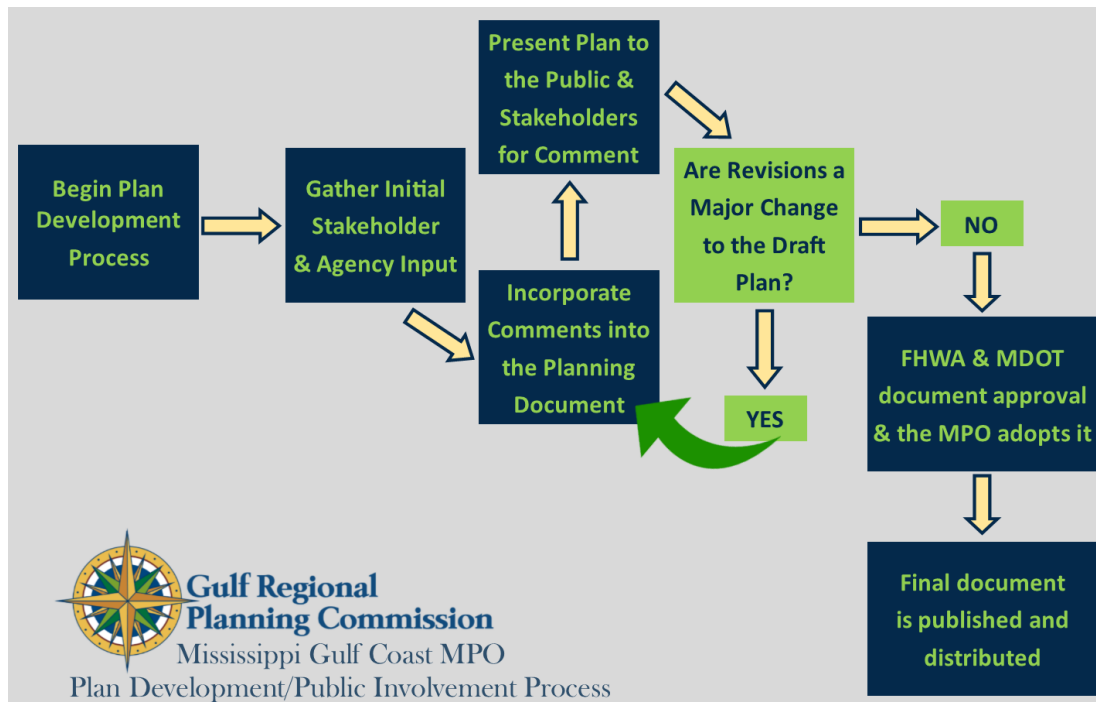
Make public information (technical information and meeting notices) available electronically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All public notices, drafts, supporting documents, maps and other materials are made available through the GRPC webpage</li> <li>• Links to materials and notices of opportunity to participate are provided through the GRPC social media page(s)</li> <li>• Member notification and links to materials are sent through email communications</li> </ul>
Hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As able, meetings and events are scheduled in the immediately affected community (Ex. Cancellation of a bus route in a particular city, or a technical study done on a specific corridor)</li> <li>• General county meetings for plan updates are scheduled at a variety of times (some mid-day, some in the evening allowing access for varied work schedules.</li> <li>• At least one meeting is held on a fixed bus route</li> <li>• Whenever possible, public meetings are held in conjunction with exiting events where transportation stakeholders and community members are already convening</li> </ul>
Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All public comments received are recorded, considered by the MPO and staff and documented in the appendix of the corresponding document</li> <li>• MPO staff will talk with any community member with questions, comments or concerns</li> <li>• The draft document will be edited, as appropriate, based on received public input</li> </ul>
Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved, who may face challenges accessing employment and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted outreach to engage underserved populations and/or their representatives is conducted with every MTP update process</li> <li>• Each TIP project is evaluated to determine if it will have direct impact on an underserved population area, if yes, targeted outreach is conducted in that immediate area, including an additional public meeting if warranted</li> <li>• Community members, agencies and organizations representing the underserved are actively encouraged to participate on the MPO CAC as well as in public review periods</li> </ul>
Provide an additional public review, if the final plan differs significantly from the draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MPO will coordinate an additional review and comment period of 10 days whenever a final varies significantly from the original draft</li> </ul>
Coordinate with the statewide public involvement and consultation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates to the MTP and TIP are coordinated closely with the statewide update process</li> <li>• The MPO conducts independent PPP reviews and updates accordingly, this may or may not be in conjunction with a state/federal effort</li> <li>• All amendments and modifications are discussed and provided to state and federal authorities prior</li> </ul>

	<p>to final approval, this include FTA when transit projects, funds, etc. are involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical study notifications are produced by the LPA, and are provided to MPO, state and federal representatives for review and comment</li> </ul>
Periodically review the effectiveness of the participation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PPP is reviewed annually and updated or amended as needed</li> <li>• The participation and development processes of the MTP are evaluated by the broad range of planning staff and partners to identify process strengths and areas needing improvement</li> </ul>
Public participation process and received comments will be documented and made part of the final plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of notices, sign-in sheets and comments received are documented in the appendix of the corresponding document</li> </ul>
A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised planning document is adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PPP has a 45 day review period</li> <li>• The MTP is 45 for full update, 10 for amendments</li> <li>• The TIP is 45 for full update, 10 for amendments</li> <li>• Technical studies have a 21 day review period</li> <li>• The UPWP requires no public review</li> </ul>
Consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPO staff maintain relationships with a wide variety of public agencies and private organizations active in various planning and development efforts, some are members of the MPO or regularly attend meetings, and others are engaged specifically at times of plan update (Ex. Comprehensive plans are reviewed to be incorporated into each MTP update)</li> </ul>
If MPA includes Tribal lands...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable in our planning region</li> </ul>
If MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve Federal land management agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stennis and NASA are actively encouraged to participate in regular MPO activities, review periods and public meetings</li> <li>• Representatives from Keesler AFB and the Naval Construction Battalion are also encouraged to participate in MPO activities</li> </ul>

## *Public Comments*

The MPO encourages interested community members and stakeholders to contact staff members at any time with questions, comments and feedback on MPO activities. Engagement is a priority of the agency. Comments may be submitted in a variety of ways including by mail, in person, by email and over the phone. Comments made through social media posts are not considered formal comments, however, if staff become aware of a social media post that may have been intended to be included, they'll reach out to that individual with information about how to submit a formal comment.

# Incorporating Public Input



In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316, all public comments will be collected, reviewed and considered by the MPO prior to the adoption of a planning document. Following the review of comments, if no significant changes are made to the draft, it shall then be considered for formal adoption. However, if significant changes are recommended, the draft document will be amended, and an additional 10-day public review and comment period will be coordinated.

Significant changes to a draft are those in which the scope of a project is amended, such as adding new project elements, changes in number of lanes, or a significant increase in roadway mileage for a proposed project. Minor changes include; increase in congressional earmarks, change in year of implementation, or additional right-of-way acquisition. Minor changes do not require an additional public comment period.

## Engagement Strategies

Public involvement in the transportation planning process is required, but more importantly, it is critical to the development of a system that meets the current needs and future development goals of the local citizens.

Community members, freight operators, tourists and others travel across south Mississippi every day. They use numerous modes on our roadways and pathways and have more experience in a multitude of conditions that planning staff can ever hope to become familiar with. Early, effective and meaningful public participation brings unique insight, observations and opinions into the planning process. The MPO uses a wide variety of engagement methods, typically several at a time, to ensure that interested individuals have equal access and opportunity to participate in the MPO decision-making process.

**Agency Website:** Maintain an agency website ([www.grpc.com](http://www.grpc.com)) which provides easy access to MPO final reports, event notices, survey and opinion opportunities, maps, study reports, information on other GRPC projects, news and more.

**Surveys/Polls:** Conduct surveys and polls to solicit public input through internet, telephone, or in-person activities to garner community feedback for the planning process.

**Community Events:** Participate in existing events to disseminate MPO information, increase agency awareness in the community and gather public input on planning objectives.

**Public Meetings:** Coordinate public meetings at convenient times and at accessible locations to allow community members to participate in the planning process. Typically, this includes hosting at least one public meeting/open-house in each county, at least one on a bus route, one in the evening and one held mid-day.

**Partnerships:** Establish working relationships with MPO member organizations, other agencies and local businesses and the non-profit sector to share knowledge, disseminate information and encourage participation in planning efforts.

**Visual Aids:** In-house or in partnership with other organizations, provide maps, typical cross-section graphics, roadway renderings, charts and tables for public consideration of proposed investments. Also, provide input opportunities in a visual way when applicable.

**Committee Meetings:** Each meeting starts with opportunity for public comment. In addition, we communicate MPO performance, planning information and program status to the GRPC Board, CAC, TCC and TPC meetings. Encourage committee member participation in planned public engagement activities, be aware of their events and activities and cross share information with the community members.

**Email Communications:** Meeting invitations, important news, event notices, voting opportunities, program announcements, project updates and other critical MPO information is disseminated via email. We encourage participation in MPO events and activities through our email efforts. A comprehensive contact roster is kept for each MPO Committee as well as other critical local contacts.

**Print and Broadcast Media:** When possible the MPO works with local television, radio and print media outlets to educate and inform the public of upcoming events, transportation changes, potential community impact of proposed investments, travel skills, legal and procedural awareness and other information.

**Distribution Materials:** Brochures, Fliers, posters, signs, push cards and invitations are all examples of materials designed for public distribution. The MPO may create materials about specific projects and programs, regional planning efforts, changes in regulations, policies or program progress as a whole.

**Presentations and Trainings:** We conduct training events and presentations to increase awareness of regional transportation planning processes, concerns and countermeasures as well as increase public awareness of the MPO role and our program of work. Community organizations can request a presentation at their location.

**Social Media:** Facebook is the main social media platform utilized by the MPO in its outreach efforts. Notices, news, reminders, invitations and requests for feedback are all posted for public consumption. The MPO also developed a Twitter page and is incorporating it into its larger outreach program.

**Virtual Involvement:** Virtual involvement is a collection of technology based outreach methods that reduces dependence on traditional public meetings to communicate effectively with community members. Options include telephone town hall meetings, tablet based surveys in multiple languages, real time polling, low-cost videos, posted presentations, collaboration software, story maps, and many more options for broader participation with the community.

# Regional Transit Planning

## Coast Transit Authority Overview



In 1970, the Mississippi State Legislature created the Mississippi Coast Transportation Authority (MCTA) and tasked the agency to provide public transportation services within the Gulf Coast region. Operation of services under this authority officially commenced on August 16, 1974. In 1985, MCTA changed its name to the Coast Transit Authority (CTA).

CTA is a non-profit provider of public transportation for the three coastal counties of Mississippi. It is an independently managed public utility that is governed by a Board of Commissioners. The Board is tasked with establishing agency policy while the day-to-day operations are led by an Executive Director.

Funding for CTA's operations and capital projects is currently provided by self-generated revenue, the Federal Transit Administration, State of Mississippi, Harrison County, and the Cities of Biloxi, Gulfport, D'Iberville and Ocean Springs. Self-generated funds consist of passenger fares, advertising revenue, charter revenue, contract revenue, vending revenue and sale of surplus equipment. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding is provided in the form of operating (50/50) and capital (80/20) grants. To access these grants, either 50% or 20% local match funds are required.

### *The CTA Mission*

To provide safe, dependable, clean, comfortable, convenient and affordable public transportation services to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in a cost efficient manner.



CTA Beach Comfort Station at Courthouse Rd. (2017)



CTA Trolley at Biloxi Lighthouse and Welcome Center (2015)



# Transit Service Profile

CTA offers the following types of transit services:

**Fixed-Route Public Transportation** – CTA offers a total of 8 routes which provide service in portions of Ocean Springs, St. Martin, D'Iberville, Biloxi and Gulfport. Service is also offered during hazardous weather and large community events. All CTA buses and trolleys are ADA accessible. Portions of the fixed route system runs on Sundays. Bilingual, English/Spanish, route and schedule information is made available on the CTA website: [www.coasttransit.com](http://www.coasttransit.com) within the published Rider's Guide, available for free to the community.



**Bike 'N Bus** – Every bus and trolley on the fixed route system is equipped to accommodate up to two bicycles on an easy to use front rack free of charge.

**ADA Para Transit** – CTA offers complementary curb-to-curb ADA para transit services within Harrison and Jackson Counties to qualified individuals. Applications for service are taken at the CTA Offices (333 DeBuys Road, Gulfport, MS). ADA para transit is available within 3/4 of a mile on either side of CTA's fixed route bus system. Individuals may go anywhere they want, as long as the destination is on an existing CTA fixed route.



**ADA Para Transit Plus** The goal of ADA Para Transit PLUS is to provide transportation to people with disabilities that live outside of the ADA mandated 3/4 mile service corridors. You make an appointment to ride *ADA Para Transit PLUS*. Service requests are taken Monday - Friday from 8am to 5pm at the CTA offices and are available to people in all three coastal counties. The same eligibility requirements exist for ADA and ADA Plus services.



**Park-N-Ride** – CTA offers park-and-ride services from the following locations within Harrison County: *Gulfport Transit Center; Biloxi Transit Center; Edgewater Mall; Courthouse Road*  
(Left- Gulfport Transit Center, Right- Biloxi Transit Center)



**Senior Demand-Response Transportation** – The Senior Citizen Service is a non-emergency curb-to-curb service the CTA provides in cooperation with the Harrison County Board of Supervisors. Transportation is provided free of charge to eligible participants for medical appointments, grocery shopping and to senior citizen centers. Applications for this service are collected by the Harrison County Human Resource Agency. Applicants may apply online, in person and by phone.

**Coast Commuter** – The Coast Commuter is a work transportation program consisting of vanpools, carpools and fixed route services. The Commuter program provides cost and stress reducing commute options for the three coastal counties. Contact CTA at 228-896-8080 or [www.coasttransit.com](http://www.coasttransit.com).



**Emergency Services** – CTA provides transportation services in the event of an emergency situation impacting residents in the Gulf Coast region. The most common type of service is free access to inclement weather shelters. Harrison County residents may also utilize evacuation services provided in partnership with the Harrison County Emergency Management Agency. The service is available to all citizens including seniors, the

disabled and people with pets. Some restrictions apply. Citizens can register for emergency transportation by calling CTA at 228-896-8080 or at [www.coasttransit.com](http://www.coasttransit.com).

## Public Participation Overview

CTA must also fully comply with federal participation guidelines to “... provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and support early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and Transportation Improvement Programs...” Similarly, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, they may not discriminate in the commission of their programs, activities and services. Per FTA Circular 4702.1B, CTA is not required to conduct a formal equity analysis for proposed service and fare changes, but they must follow US DOT guidance to avoid or mitigate disparate impacts on protected populations.

In compliance with this guidance, CTA and MPO staff review all proposed changes to identify whether one or more traditionally underserved groups will be impacted by a proposed change. The review process reveals the percentage of impact expected for those populations. The percentage of impact helps staff determine if the change is minor and major, which in turn, defines the length of public review required.

Awareness of a possible disparate impact directs the staff in planning appropriate targeted outreach activities in locations and times most convenient for affected publics. More information on disparate impact and the CTA Title VI Plan can be found at [www.coasttransit.com](http://www.coasttransit.com) or can be requested from CTA staff at 228-896-8080.

CTA, as a fixed-route provider and recipient of Section 5307 FTA funds, complies with these additional requirements:

1. Have a written agreement with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that determines their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process.
2. Provide information about its available funding under Section 5307 to the public and provide for public involvement in the in the Program of Projects (POP) it proposes to undertake.
3. Have a written policy that describes the public comment process on increases in the basic fare structure or implementing a major service reduction that addresses the required elements.
4. For Section 5307-funded fixed-route service, charge no more than half the peak hour fare for seniors, persons with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders during off-peak hours.
5. Utilize one percent of the Section 5307 expenditures for transit security.
6. For Section 5307 funds awarded before October 1, 2015, have met the associated transit improvement requirements.
7. Ensure that subrecipients, contractors, and lessees that receive Section 5307 funds or use Section 5307-funded property comply with Section 5307 half-fare and public comment requirements.

# Participation Guidelines for CTA Planning Documents

Coast Transit Authority (CTA) maintains several planning documents that provide a vision for future service, establishes guidelines and lists activities for the use of federal funding. When updates and changes to these documents are required, opportunity for public review is provided as described below:

CTA Planning Document Change Descriptions	
<b>FULL UPDATE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required document update</li> </ul>
<b>AMENDMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addition or deletion of a project</li> <li>Major changes scope</li> <li>Change in system service standard measure or threshold</li> <li>Financial changes in a project's programmed amount of federal funds greater than 20% of the original cost</li> </ul>
<b>MODIFICATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correcting obvious minor data entry errors</li> <li>Splitting or combining projects without modifying the original project design, concept and scope or creating project segmentation</li> <li>Changing or clarifying elements of a project description. This change would not alter the original project design, concept and scope. It also must be consistent with the approved environmental document.</li> <li>Moving a project from one federal funding category to another federal funding category</li> <li>Moving a project from federal funding to state funding</li> <li>Shifting the schedule of a project or phase within the years covered by the TIP</li> <li>Updating project cost estimates (within the original project scope and intent) less than 20% of the original cost estimate</li> <li>Moving any identified project phase programmed for previous year into a new TIP (rollover provision)</li> <li>Adding an additional agency to a group</li> <li>Adding projects with grouped projects within the TIP, provided fiscal constrain is maintained</li> <li>Removing a project reported as obligated or completed</li> <li>Re-demonstration of fiscal constraint is not required</li> </ul>

Planning Documents Public Review	
<b>FULL UPDATE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CTA Board of Commissioners approval</li> <li>30-day public comment period</li> <li>Public meeting/open-house</li> <li>Public comment report</li> <li>Public meeting notice on the agency's website and Facebook page the week before and day of the scheduled event(s)</li> <li>Review Period notice on the agency's website and Facebook page on day 1 and 15 of the scheduled review period</li> </ul>
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10-day public comment period</li> <li>Review Period notice on the agency's website and Facebook page on day 1 and 5 of the scheduled review period</li> </ul>
<b>MODIFICATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>

## Participation Guidelines for Service Changes

CTA continuously evaluates its programs and services to ensure alignment with goals, objectives, new priorities available funding and other variables. Each year, they complete a comprehensive evaluation resulting in the Service Review Plan. The Plan identifies new transit services and significant changes to existing services for the following year; identifies changes that are designed to achieve specific service goals and opportunities for service expansion and improvement, as well as defining a process with which to measure and evaluate system performance on a year-to-year basis. When planning for transit service expansion or reduction, an evaluation process is completed to determine if service reduction or expansion is warranted. Once the recommendation is developed, a public review and comment period is used to discuss proposed changes with the community and gather input from CTA customers and the public as follows:

Types of Transit System Changes	
<b>MAJOR CHANGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding a new service route (25% or greater)</li> <li>• Revenue route miles reduction to a route (25% or greater)</li> <li>• Service area reduction to a route (25% or greater)</li> <li>• Span of service changes to a route (25% or greater)</li> <li>• All system fare increases</li> <li>• System wide changes to process and/or standards</li> <li>• Route elimination</li> <li>• All headway changes</li> </ul>
<b>MINOR CHANGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenue route miles reduction to a route (less than 25%)</li> <li>• Service area reduction to a route (less than 25%)</li> <li>• Span of service changes to a route (less than 25%)</li> <li>• Administrative changes to service standards</li> <li>• Load factor changes</li> <li>• Vehicle type change</li> </ul>

Transit System Changes Public Review	
<b>MAJOR CHANGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTA Board of Commissioners approval</li> <li>• 30-day public comment period</li> <li>• Public meeting/open-house</li> <li>• Targeted outreach to affected low-income, minority and LEP areas</li> <li>• Targeted outreach to other vulnerable populations</li> <li>• Public comment report</li> <li>• Customer impact analysis</li> <li>• Public meeting notice on the agency's website and Facebook page the week before and day of the scheduled event(s)</li> <li>• Review Period notice on the agency's website and Facebook page on day 1 and 15 of the scheduled review period</li> </ul>
<b>MINOR CHANGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTA Board of Commissioners approval</li> <li>• Informational meeting</li> <li>• Customer impact analysis</li> <li>• Notice of change with link to any appropriate materials posted on the agency website and Facebook page</li> </ul>

*\*Temporary services/demonstration projects of less than 12 months are exempt from these requirements.*

## CTA Role in MPO Planning

CTA staff work closely with the MPO in developing several regional transportation planning documents and in setting transit goals for the MS Gulf Coast. Examples include the FTA chapter within the MS Gulf Coast TIP, GRPC submission of transit survey data, allocations of funding to support transit focused work in the MPO's work program, The Transportation Development Plan (long-range transit goals) and the partnered execution of outreach programs for proposed route and fare changes. The CTA mobility Manager and MPO Public Involvement Coordinator coordinate to ensure that CTA public engagement activities meet applicable FHWA and FTA standards as well as non-discrimination regulations.

CTA staff and their Board of Commissioners have elected to follow the MPO maintained Public Participation Plan (PPP) instead of managing a separate document. This transit chapter was added to the GRPC/MPO PPP during the 2014 plan update to better address transit specific needs and requirements. CTA staff will participate in the updating, amending and review process of the PPP to ensure that the transit information contained within remains current, relevant and effective in meeting objectives. Federal allocations for CTA programs are adopted by the TPC and are approved by MDOT and FHWA.

Coordinative activities include CTA making their staff available to the MPO for translation purposes. CTA has agreed to assist MPO staff with meeting the participation plan's LEP and EJ goals by sharing their bilingual staff and other translation resources when possible. CTA also supports MPO efforts to host meetings in convenient locations and times by allowing MPO staff to use transit center meeting spaces for events.

More transit planning information, current participation opportunities, contact information and copies of transit specific documents can be found at [www.coasttransit.com](http://www.coasttransit.com).

## MPO Role in CTA Planning

The MPO role in the CTA/GRPC partnership focuses mainly on conducting planning activities. MPO staff regularly coordinate improvement studies to support CTA development efforts. Common outputs include route and stop enhancements, bus shelter and transit access needs, service expansion planning, headway reduction analysis, equity analysis reports and encouraging the incorporation of transit in regional roadway improvement projects.

GRPC meeting space is made available to CTA for their agency events and activities. CTA education and outreach materials are distributed in the GRPC office building and are often taken to public events hosted and attended by MPO staff. The MPO Public Participation/Title VI Coordinator works directly with CTA to develop and maintain their Title VI plan and works with staff, when requested, to conduct outreach activities.

In 2018, the MPO and CTA updated their agreement and MPO staff coordinated cooperatively in drafting new, federally required performance targets prior to CTA Board review and final adoption. The MPO accepts and will contribute to the accomplishment of the set targets and will be notified when performance reports are submitted to FTA.



## Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization Gulf Regional Planning Commission

### Part 2: Civil Rights Program

The purpose of the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO Civil Rights Program is to ensure that public funds are not spent in a manner that encourages, subsidizes or results in discrimination. The function of this program is to eliminate barriers and conditions that prevent traditionally underserved community members from having access to, being able to participate in and/or to receive the benefits from federally-assisted programs, services and activities.

GRPC employs a full time staff person who oversees public relations and is the designated civil rights coordinator for the agency. Working in partnership with the Mississippi Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Civil Rights Offices, she conducts the day to day administration of the civil rights program and works to ensure compliance with all applicable non-discrimination regulations.

Since the MS Gulf Coast MPO serves a transportation management area (TMA), we must certify annually that our planning process is being conducted in compliance with all applicable regulations, including non-discrimination provisions. The Self-Certification form and Non-Discrimination Policy are in Appendix D.

## Civil Rights Authorities

Our Civil Rights Program reflects the requirements outlined in a variety of federal, state and presidential authorities. Each of these regulations works to ensure equal treatment and access to agency programs.

- **Civil Rights Act of 1964** – The Civil Rights Act made it unlawful to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion or gender. There are 11 Titles within the Act and Title VI is the applied Title for GRPC and the MPO. The non-discrimination requirements defined in the Civil Rights Act apply to all federally assisted programs, public accommodations, voter rights, public education and more.
- **Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987** – The Restoration Act specifies that recipients of federal funds must comply with civil rights laws in all agency activities not just those programs receiving federal funding.
- **Uniform Act of 1970** – the Uniform Act ensures fair compensation and assistance for those whose property was compulsorily acquired for public use under “Eminent Domain” law.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** – The ADA provides protections for disabled persons. There are five titles that make up the act. Title II applies to the MPO. It prohibits disability discrimination by ensuring that individuals have equal, physical and programmatic access, to all programs and services.
- **Age Discrimination Act of 1975** – Prohibits discrimination based on age.
- **Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973** – Prohibits discrimination based on sex/gender.



- **Executive order 12898: Environmental Justice** – Ensures that minority and low-income community members do not bear disproportionately high or adverse burdens, have equal opportunity to participate in the planning process, and are not denied program benefits.
- **Executive order 13166: Limited English Proficiency** – Ensures programs, services and activities are accessible, by means of reasonable language assistance, to persons who are not proficient in the English language, meaning that they do not read, write, speak, or understand English well.

## Obstacles Hindering Participation

Many people who have one or more personal challenges, including mobility or access limitations, fall into very particular patterns of behavior. They may be unwilling, unable, or unaware of opportunities to participate in key transportation decisions, some of which may directly impact their quality of life. For these reasons, the MPO works to engage with and to receive input from all populations of the region.

For those who are not members of a traditionally underserved population, it may be difficult to comprehend the very real challenges others face with regard to transportation. To better understand, think about times you've been challenged in your life, for example:

- Negotiating a crowded train or subway station when visiting a new city
- Caring for an aging parent or disabled child
- Trying to climb a flight of stairs with an injured leg
- Being dependent on others when your car is in the mechanic shop
- Traveling to a foreign country where English is seldom spoken or only poorly
- Getting lost in a dimly lit area without access to a map or ability to ask for help
- Having something to say in a meeting but feeling indulged or being completely ignored

These experiences represent only a fraction of what the traditionally underserved deal with every day. The MPO strives to alleviate some of these obstacles by making their public involvement program as accessible as possible. This includes making information easier to access and mitigating physical barriers to participation by holding meetings at more convenient times and locations as well as offering mail, in-person, web-based, telephone and email feedback avenues to communicate with MPO staff.

## Communication Strategies

In 2018, the Florida Department of Transportation commissioned a national public participation study titled *Use of Communication Technologies to Enhance Public Involvement in Transportation Projects*, (Lead Author: Priyank Alluri, June 2018, No. BDV29-977-32) This 181 page report is a comprehensive study on the various types of emerging communication tools and technologies. It provides a pro/con evaluation of 17 different technology-based outreach options that are meant to disseminate information, facilitate two-way communication or assist community members to actively participate in the planning process.

The study, and other related materials, found that technology-based communication strategies are becoming the expectation of community members, and agencies acknowledge that using technology reduces outreach and staff time expenses even if there may be some up front training costs and that using technology enhances their ability to reach more people and members of protected populations in a meaningful way.

It is recommended in FHWA Every Day Counts 5, Virtual Public Involvement program that we should begin developing and using virtual participation techniques, however, they do not now nor in the foreseeable future, expect online engagement to completely replace elements of our traditional public outreach program, like in person public meetings. Instead, agencies are developing combined outreach approaches to effectively reach their publics meeting federal requirements and local participation goals and objectives.

The next two tables were published in the FDOT study. The first table shows traditional efforts being utilized for engaging underserved populations in the planning process. The MS Gulf Coast MPO continues to use most of these strategies. The second table reveals which current technology-based tools work best for the various

**Table 3-5: Efforts Made by States to Involve Underserved Population Groups**

<b>Underserved Population Groups</b>	<b>Special Efforts to Involve Underrepresented Residents In Public Involvement Activities</b>
Low-Income Households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide convenient meeting times and child-centered activities</li> <li>• Provide suitable meeting location</li> <li>• Notify and engage through house visits, emails, phone calls, and mailers</li> <li>• Visit area affected by project and assist people in that area</li> <li>• Saturate the area with notices</li> <li>• Conduct targeted outreach (i.e., small group meetings) and specialized notification of upcoming public meetings</li> <li>• Provide notification through social media</li> </ul>
Minority Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide meeting locations near transit stops</li> <li>• Engage and notify through house visits, emails, phone calls, and mailers</li> <li>• Offer refreshments and advertise more about the meeting</li> <li>• Visit all areas affected by projects</li> <li>• Saturate the area with notices</li> <li>• Interact with community leaders</li> <li>• Look for LARCS (Local area/Language Assistance Resource Contacts) in the community to help disseminate information, encourage participation at scheduled public involvement events, and/or organize small group meetings</li> <li>• Collaborate with the Office of Equal Opportunity that engages all people</li> <li>• Work with legislators</li> <li>• Engage with population leadership/groups</li> </ul>
Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete comprehensive LEP analysis to determine languages meeting threshold for translation services</li> <li>• Make sure that websites are translated into other languages</li> <li>• Provide interpreters and other translation and interpretation services at meetings</li> <li>• Identify all the stakeholders within a project area, and reach out to them</li> <li>• Translate meeting materials for LEP stakeholders</li> <li>• Provide specific language newsletters to local markets/churches, etc.</li> </ul>
Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that facilities meet ADA requirements before scheduling meetings</li> <li>• Provide special accommodations</li> <li>• Upon request, provide reasonable accommodations including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the agencies' services, programs, and activities</li> <li>• All meeting locations should be ADA-compliant facilities and accessible</li> <li>• Provide ADA statement on meeting notifications/advertisements for people to call in to request special services to participate. Work with social services to share information</li> <li>• Provide Facebook, Twitter, and other social media posts announcing the meetings as well as opportunities to provide information to those who cannot participate</li> </ul>
Older Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide hearing assistance tools; larger-format handouts and slides</li> <li>• Provide special accommodations</li> <li>• Notify and engage through house visits, emails, phone calls, and mailers</li> <li>• Visit all areas affected by projects</li> <li>• Saturate the area with notices</li> <li>• Provide convenient meeting time and meeting location</li> <li>• Provide engagement meetings/talks with community groups</li> </ul>

populations we serve.

**Table E-1: Recommended Communication Media**

<b>Communication Media</b>		<b>General Public &amp; People with Physical Impairment</b>	<b>Older Population</b>	<b>Minority Population</b>	<b>Low-income Population</b>	<b>People with LEP</b>	<b>Hearing-Impaired People</b>	<b>Vision-Impaired People</b>
<b>Disseminate Information</b>	Twitter	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Feeder	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	RapidFeeds	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Blogger	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Broadcast Forums	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Email-Blasts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Textedly	Yes	Yes	May be	May be	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Facilitate Two-way Communication</b>	Skype	May be	May be	May be	May be	No	Yes	Yes
	GoToMeeting	Yes	Yes	Yes	May be	No	No	No
	Adobe Connect Meetings	May be	May be	May be	May be	No	No	No
	Facebook	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	May be	Yes	Yes
	YouTube	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	SurveyMonkey	May be	May be	May be	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	WhatsApp	No <sup>1</sup>	No <sup>1</sup>	No <sup>1</sup>	No <sup>1</sup>	No <sup>1</sup>	No <sup>1</sup>	No <sup>1</sup>
<b>Assist in Participation</b>	Google Maps	Yes	Yes	Yes	May be	Yes	Yes	Yes
	MetroQuest	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Podcasts	Yes	May be	Yes	Yes	No	May be <sup>2</sup>	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Not recommended because of privacy issues; <sup>2</sup> Only if podcast transcripts are available.

The MS Gulf Coast MPO will use this table as a guide for developing an updated participation plan that effectively involves all interested parties.

As you can see from the “Recommended Communication Media” table,

- ❖ Certain technologies reach some populations well but are not effective with other groups.
  - Twitter is best used to reach the general public, physically disabled persons, LEP, hearing impaired and vision impaired people, But seniors, minorities and low-income persons may not get your message
- ❖ Some communication tools do not work well for any group
  - Broadcast forums, like TV and radio, and RSS feeds are ineffective for all groups
- ❖ Several methods have been shown to effectively reach all populations
  - Facebook, YouTube, Google maps and email blasts can be effective tools for everyone

# ADA Compliance

The MS Gulf Coast MPO's compliance requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are outlined in Title II which states that ALL activities, services, and programs of the "public entity" must comply with ADA regulations. Unlike section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which only covers programs receiving Federal financial assistance, Title II requires that all activities of the state and local governments, whether or not a particular program is receiving federal funds, be compliant.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO assures that it will not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in the admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services or activities. Qualified individuals who need accessible communication assistance or other accommodations to participate in the transportation planning process are invited to make their needs known to the agency's Public Involvement/Title VI Coordinator. The MPO requires that requests for reasonable accommodation be received at least 5 business days in advance of a scheduled event date or publication deadline. Staff will make their best effort to meet the needs of community members.

Upon request, this plan and other MPO materials can be made available in alternative formats (for example; large print or google translated versions). Printing accommodations will be provided at no cost to the requesting individual. Questions and accommodation requests can be submitted in-person, by mail, email or called in to:

Stephanie Plancich  
GRPC/MS Gulf Coast MPO, Public Involvement & Title VI Coordinator  
1635-G Popps Ferry Road, Biloxi MS 39532  
Phone: 228-864-1167 x218  
Email: [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com)  
On-line: [www.grpc.com](http://www.grpc.com)

Non-discrimination sample notices, grievance policy and complaint forms have been made available, in English and Spanish and can be downloaded from [www.grpc.com](http://www.grpc.com) or viewed in Appendix E.

## Definitions

**Disability:** To qualify as having a **disability** one or more of the following conditions must exist.

1. a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
2. a record of such an impairment; or
3. being regarded as having such an impairment

Physical or mental impairment means any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genitourinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; any mental or psychological disorder such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities; includes contagious and noncontagious diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, specific learning disabilities, HIV disease (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic), tuberculosis, drug addiction, and alcoholism; does not include homosexuality or bisexuality.

Major Life Activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. A major life activity also includes the operation of a

major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions. An impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active.

The determination of whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity shall be made without regard to the improvement effects of mitigating measures such as; medication, medical supplies, equipment, or appliances, low-vision devices (which do not include ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses), prosthetics, hearing aids and cochlear implants or other implantable hearing devices, mobility devices, or oxygen therapy equipment and supplies; use of assistive technology; reasonable accommodations or auxiliary aids or services; or learned behavioral or adaptive neurological modifications.

An individual meets the requirement of "being regarded as having such an impairment" if the individual establishes that he or she has been subjected to an action prohibited under this chapter because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits a major life activity. This does not apply to impairments that are transitory and minor. A transitory impairment is an impairment with an actual or expected duration of 6 months or less.

#### **Qualified Individuals:**

A "qualified" individual with a disability is one who meets the essential eligibility requirements for the program or activity offered by a public entity. The "essential eligibility requirements" will depend on the type of service or activity involved. For some activities, such as State licensing programs, the ability to meet specific skill and performance requirements may be "essential." For other activities, such as where the public entity provides information to anyone who requests it, the "essential eligibility requirements" would be minimal.

**Auxiliary aids and services:** The term "auxiliary aids and services" refers to strategies that effectively make information and materials accessible to the hearing and visually impaired. Reasonable accommodation may include interpreters, large print documents, one-on-one discussions, qualified readers and taped text technology, and other methods.

**Reasonable accommodation:** Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job, work environment, or function of an organization that will enable a qualified participant or employee with a disability to participate in the program, service or activity. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of employees without disabilities.

An employer is only required to accommodate a "known" disability of a qualified applicant or employee. The requirement generally will be triggered by a request from an individual with a disability, who frequently will be able to suggest an appropriate accommodation. Accommodations must be made on an individual basis, because the nature and extent of a disabling condition and the requirements of a job will vary in each case. If the individual does not request an accommodation, the employer is not obligated to provide one except where an individual's known disability impairs his/her ability to know of, or effectively communicate a need for, an accommodation that is obvious to the employer. If a person with a disability requests, but cannot suggest, an appropriate accommodation, the employer and the individual should work together to identify one. There are also many public and private resources that can provide assistance without cost.

#### **Undue Burden and Fundamental Alteration**

Title II of the ADA and Section 504, as applicable to state and local agencies, requires a public entity to make its programs accessible to staff and publics in all cases, except where to do so would result in undue financial or administrative burdens or would fundamentally alter the nature of the program in question.

**Undue Burden:** An employer is not required to make an accommodation if it would impose an undue burden or hardship on the operation of the employer's business. "Undue hardship" is defined as an "action requiring significant difficulty or expense" when considered in light of a number of factors. These factors include the nature and cost of the accommodation in relation to the size, resources, nature, and structure of the employer's operation. Undue hardship is determined on a case-by-case basis. In general, a larger employer with greater resources would be expected to make accommodations requiring greater effort or expense than would be required of a smaller employer with fewer resources.

If an accommodation would be an undue hardship, the agency must try to identify another accommodation that will not pose such a hardship. Also, if the cost of an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the employer, the individual with a disability should be given the option of paying that portion of the cost which would constitute an undue hardship or providing the accommodation.

Example: An MPO decides to update its website. Several new elements are proposed including assistive devices that are not currently supported. Another new element of the site is the development of an interactive project map. To purchase an accessible version of the mapping software would require the entire project budget. The MPO can claim this expense as an undue hardship but would be expected to provide the map information in some other format for users with disabilities.

**Fundamental Alteration:** The classic example is, for someone who is Deaf to ask that the lights in a planetarium be raised so that she could see her interpreter. Of course, this would fundamentally alter the experience for everyone, including the person who asked. However, even though the planetarium could - and probably did - deny this request, the planetarium still has obligations under the ADA. One possible solution would be to offer the patron a seat off on the far right or left and position the interpreter with a dim light right in front of her. Another would be to provide her with the narrator's script and a clip on light.

## Steps to Compliance

Meeting the requirements of the ADA can be accomplished by implementing seven general steps. Each step is listed below with a brief description of where GRPC is in accomplishing each listed task.

1. Designate an ADA Program Coordinator
  - a. Complete: GRPC designated a Title VI coordinator to oversee the Civil Rights Program which includes ensuring compliance with Title II of the ADA
2. Provide notice to the public about ADA requirements
  - a. Complete: Continuous notice is provided in public spaces at the GRPC office building as well as on the agency website at [www.grpc.com](http://www.grpc.com).
3. Establish a Grievance Procedure
  - a. Complete: The agency reviewed and revised its procedure and complaint process. The revised documents are available in English and Spanish in print upon request, electronically on the agency's website and posted in the GRPC office building.
4. Develop internal design standards, specifications and details
  - a. Complete: We follow the guidelines provided by the Department of Justice and discussed at [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov).
  - b. To assess our interior spaces we followed the guidelines included in the architectural barrier removal checklist



5. Assigning personnel for the development of a transition plan and implementing it
  - a. Complete: The Title VI Coordinator oversaw the development of GRPC's transition plan and will annually review progress addressing improvement recommendations
6. Approving a schedule and budget for the transition plan
  - a. All items to be addressed on the transition plan will be implemented as staff time and other resources allow.
7. Monitor implementation progress of the transition plan
  - a. Transition plan is reviewed by Title VI Coordinator and Executive Director annually.

## ADA Transition Plan

Title II specifically addresses the requirement to make public services and transportation accessible. To ensure compliance we are required to perform an annual self-evaluation and have a transition plan in place to correct any identified access deficiencies.

A transition plan should cover all facilities owned and operated by the agency. Plans typically have six core components.

1. List of physical barriers that limit accessibility (based upon annual self-evaluation)
2. Detailed description of how identified barriers will be prioritized and remedied
3. A schedule for removing the barriers
4. Name of the official responsible for implementation of the transition plan
5. Schedule for providing curb ramp improvements (This component is not applicable. GRPC does not own or manage public ROW. Our only ramps are from parking areas into our office building. These are covered in the barrier removal self-evaluation process.)
6. Record of opportunities given to the public to participate in the plan development process

# Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

## Executive Order 13166: Improving access to programs, services and activities for persons with Limited English Proficiency

The purpose of E.O. 13166 is to ensure accessibility to programs and services for persons who are not proficient in the English language. This executive order states that individuals who do not speak English well and who have a limited ability to read, write or understand English are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, further;

*Each agency shall prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons. Each plan shall be consistent with the standards set forth in the LEP Guidance and shall include the steps the agency will take to ensure that eligible LEP persons can meaningfully access the agency's programs and activities.*

The United States Census Bureau defines an LEP person as someone who does not speak English as their first language AND who has an ability level of “not well” or “not at all” in reading, writing, speaking or understanding the English language. The MS Gulf Coast adopts this definition in its evaluation of LEP needs in its planning region.

The intent of this LEP Plan is to ensure access to the planning process and information published by GRPC where it is determined that a substantial number of residents do not speak or read English proficiently. The production of multi-lingual documents and/or provision of interpretation assistance at public meetings is an example of reasonable accommodation that can be requested of the MPO. Same as the ADA accommodation policy, LEP accommodation requests should be submitted to the Title Vi Coordinator at least 5 business days in advance of a scheduled activity.

This LEP plan will be evaluated as part of the Transportation Management Area (TMA) review process. The review is conducted every four years jointly by the Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations.

### Comparison of Title VI and LEP Considerations

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	Limited English Proficiency E.O. 13166
Federal Law	Federal Policy
Enacted in 1964	Enacted in 2000
Considers all persons	Considers the eligible population
Contains monitoring & oversight requirements	Contains monitoring & oversight requirements
Provides protection based on race, color and national origin	Provides protection on the basis of national origin
Focuses on eliminating discrimination in federally funded programs	Focuses on providing LEP people meaningful access to services using a four factor analysis
Requires annual accomplishment an upcoming goals report to FHWA	Requires annual accomplishment an upcoming goals report to FHWA

# LEP Four Factor Analysis

As a recipient of federal funding, the MPO must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the information and services it provides. As noticed in the Federal Register Volume 70, Number 239 (12.14.2005), there are four factors to consider in determining “reasonable steps.” Below we have listed the four factors and the conclusions found by the GRPC in assessing the MS Gulf Coast community. This data will be updated every 10 years with the release of new census data.

## **Factor 1: The number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service area**

The number and proportion of LEP populations in the MPO planning area warrants consideration in the public participation plan. The primary language, other than English, spoken in our region is Spanish. According to the 2010 Census, there is a very small percentage of Vietnamese speaking residents that would require language accommodations to participate in the planning process. These numbers fall below the “substantial number” threshold where the MPO would be required to translate public outreach documentation as a rule. The Spanish population, however, does meet the threshold, therefore general public notices and agency fliers meant for general public dissemination will be translated and made available in Spanish without request.

## **Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP persons encounter MPO programs**

LEP populations do not regularly, nor actively participate in the transportation planning process. Agency staff do not encounter non-English speaking individuals with great frequency. On the rare occasion we do have the opportunity to interact with an LEP individual, they most often arrive in a familial or other group which provides its own language support services. (GRPC has never had a formal request for language services prior to a scheduled event or activity.) Recent program changes including; translation service on the GRPC website, targeted outreach in LEP project areas, and bi-lingual publication of informational materials is expected to increase LEP levels of participation and the agency will continue to adopt to community needs.

## **Factor 3: The importance of the service provided by MPO programs**

Each MPO program directly impacts the well-being of its constituents, including LEP populations. The identification of resources and costs to the MPO to provide communication and interaction with LEP populations is warranted. MPO projects and programs may affect the quality of life of LEP individuals as they may alter how they move in and out of the community.

## **Factor 4: The resources available and overall cost to the MPO**

Hiring out all translation and interpreter services could be financially unfeasible for the MS Gulf Coast MPO; however, GRPC staff is compiling a resource roster of potential reduced cost or no cost service providers as they build partnerships in the community. System upgrades to both the phone and website will encounter some cost, but GRPC will make the necessary upgrades even if in stages. GRPC staff will also develop generic messaging for translation that will not have to be interpreted more than once for print media and other publications, thus saving costs.

## Summary of LEP Analysis

County	<u>Spanish</u> speakers with low or no English Proficiency	<u>Vietnamese</u> speakers with low or no English Proficiency
Harrison County	1831	235
Hancock County	159	0
Jackson County	905	46

As shown, the MPO LEP priority needs to be on reaching the Spanish speaking population, however, GRPC staff has, in their community analysis, still considered the needs of the Vietnamese speaking individuals.

Since the 2000 Census reports, the Vietnamese population has seen significant changes. Populations in Biloxi reduced from 1707 to 1034, a 39.4% decrease. D'Iberville grew from 432 to 609, a 41% increase and Ocean Springs saw an 18.6% increase from 215 to 255 residents. It is reported that the changes are because of Hurricane Katrina, the rise of insurance costs near the coast and the impact of the BP oil disaster on local fishing communities (*Asian Americans for Change. 2011*). These statistics, however, are the total number of people who have identified themselves as Vietnamese. Only a small portion of these do not speak English as their primary language or are otherwise identify as having low English proficiency. As shown above, there are no individuals needing Vietnamese translation services in Hancock County, very few in Jackson County and Harrison County.

The MPO has considered these changes and has determined the following;

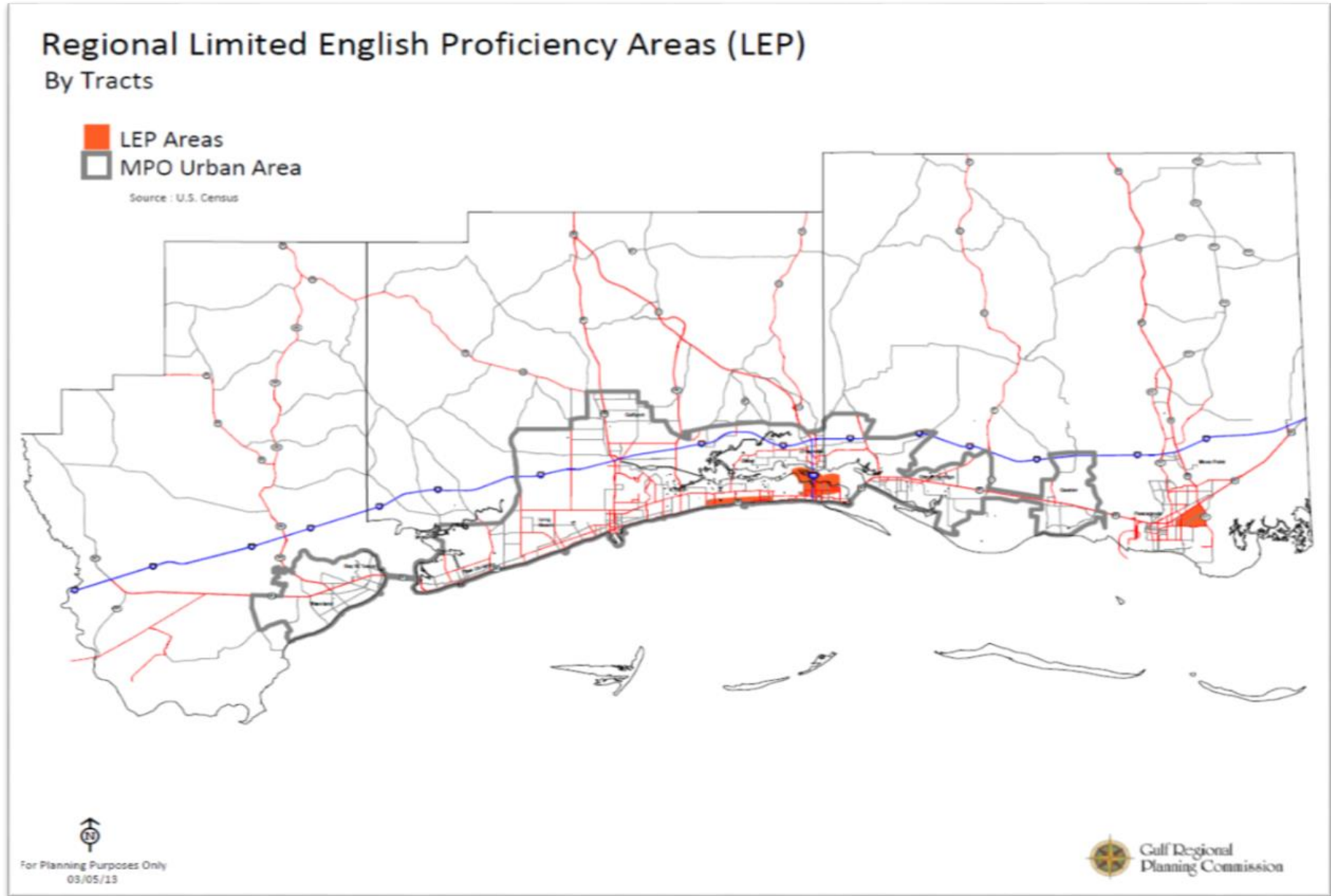
1. It is no longer fiscally responsible to translate materials into Vietnamese unless specifically requested to do so, and then we'll use online translation sources to create a printable document
2. Vietnamese interpretation services will still be available upon request at events and meetings
3. Targeted outreach will be conducted when a jurisdiction requests it, the population requests it or a project will directly impact known community gathering places and/or businesses  
Vietnamese concentrations in Harrison County
4. Vietnamese publications will be utilized when major agency documents are being updated. For example, the MTP, TIP or a completed project or study.

GRPC staff has completed the four factor community assessment and have identified who the LEP populations are, where they are located, the MPO role in their well-being and potential cost saving measures in providing language services. The assessment revealed that within the MPO boundary, Spanish speakers with limited English proficiency are the MPO priority but that we must continue to consider the needs of Vietnamese and other speakers as well. The MPO is committed to ensuring that all region residents have reasonable access to its information and to participate in the transportation planning process.

Translation and interpretation service providers include:

- Coast Transit Authority
- Our Lady of Fatima
- The United Methodist Church
- Church of the Vietnamese Martyrs
- The Buddhist Congregation in Biloxi
- Boat People SOS
- The Village El Pueblo Outreach Services
- Gulf Coast Community College

It is important to note that translation and interpretation services often have an associated cost and may take some time to coordinate. GRPC staff has and are continuing to develop relationships with individuals and organizations that may provide language services at a reduced rate or free of charge. However, there may be instances where financial constraints may make the service unreasonable. Similarly, if GRPC exhausts its list of translation service providers and no one is available on the date or at the time of the event they may not be able to provide the service. However, in either situation, GRPC staff will respond to the requesting person and will attempt to offer alternative solutions. For example, if an interpreter is not available to attend a set event, GRPC may schedule a meeting on a later date where the information could be discussed one on one with the interested person/people.



# Environmental Justice (EJ)

Executive Order 12898: Identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of agency programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations, and (DOT added) whether these populations are being denied benefits or not

EJ encompasses three fundamental principles:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health or 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 populations and low-income populations.

EJ requires the MPO to:

- Examine the allocation of benefits and burdens, currently and in projects planned in the future.
- Ensure that minority and low-income communities are treated equitably in the provision of transportation services and projects.
- Provide ample opportunity for minority and low-income communities to advise the MPO during its planning and decision-making process.

Like the ADA and LEP policies, Environmental Justice must be a consideration in all of GRPC's activities, not just those that involve the use of federal funds. The US Department of Transportation (DOT) in 23 *CFR* 450, specifically mandates that the MPO must "seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including, but not limited to, low-income and minority households." The goal of the Order is to ensure that MPO programs, policies, services and activities do not have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on minority or low-income populations.

## When should Environmental Justice be considered?

Throughout the planning process, planners must: (1) determine benefits to and potential negative impacts on minority and low-income populations from proposed investments or actions; (2) quantify expected effects (positive and negative) noting possible disproportionately high or adverse; and (3) determine the appropriate course of action (avoidance, minimization, or mitigation) in response to findings.

If identified issues are not addressed in the planning stage, they may be more costly or difficult to mitigate later, they can delay project decisions or halt project construction. It is important that the MPO makes a concerted effort to identify all impacted populations of a project and document how they may be impacted. Both positive and negative impacts should be discussed and addressed appropriately.



Environmental justice determinations are made based on **effects**, not population size. It is important to consider the **comparative impact** of an action among different population groups. Disproportionately high and adverse effects are the bases for Environmental Justice. A very small minority or low-income population in the project, study, or planning area does not eliminate the possibility of a disproportionately high and adverse effect on these populations. What is needed is to show the comparative effects on these populations in relation to either non-minority or higher income populations, as appropriate.

## What constitutes an environmental impact?

All reasonably foreseeable adverse social, economic, and environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations must be identified and addressed. Adverse effects include, but are not limited to:

- Bodily impairment, infirmity, illness, or death.
- Air, noise, and water pollution and soil contamination.
- Destruction or disruption of man-made or natural resources.
- Destruction or diminution of aesthetic values.
- Destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality.
- Destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services.
- Vibration.
- Adverse employment effects.
- Displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations.
- Increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion, or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community.
- The denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of, benefits of DOT programs, policies, or activities.

## Definitions & Mapping

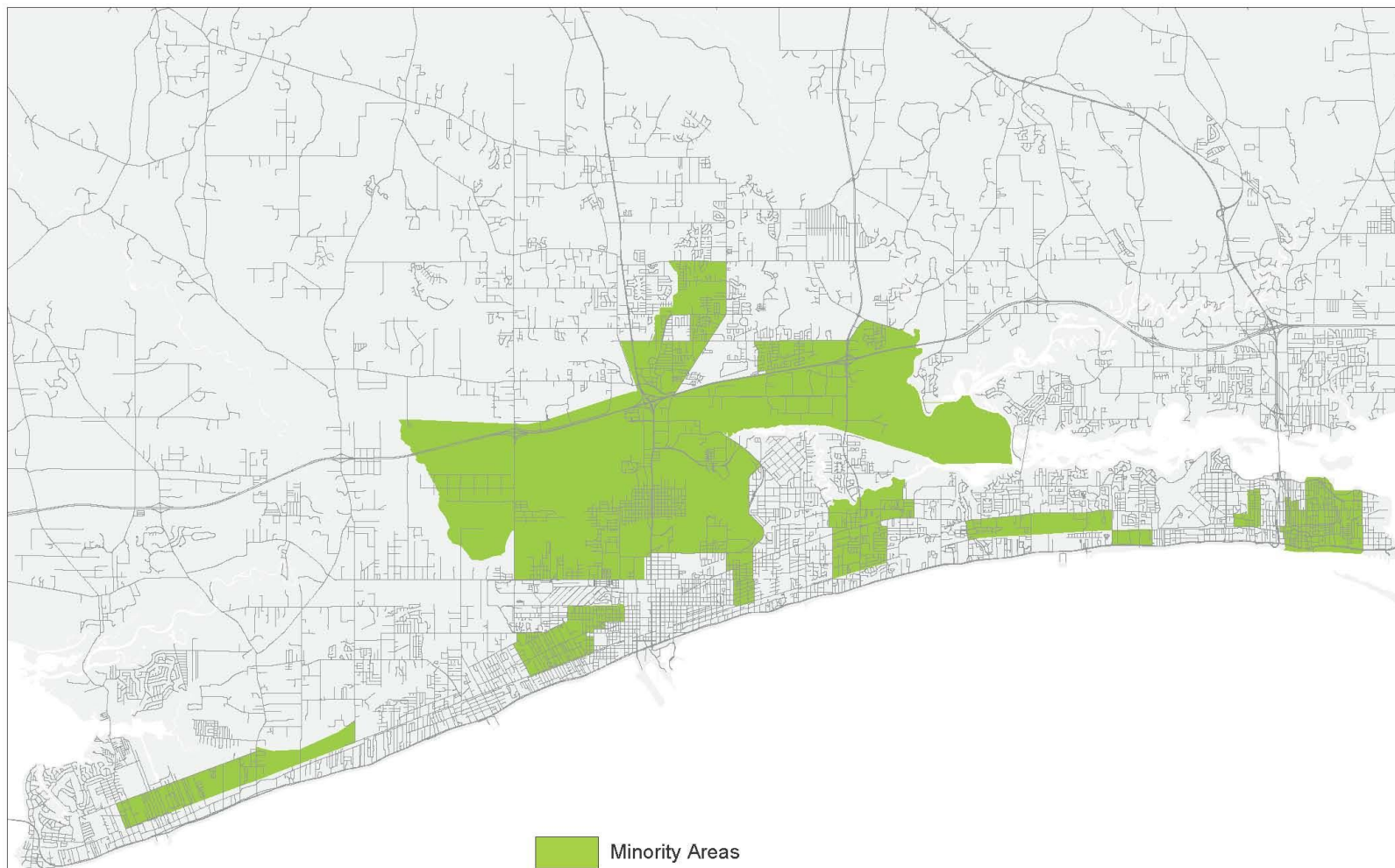
### *Minority*

The MPO mapped concentrations of minority populations by noting the block groups with above average minority representation in each county. Minority population includes people identifying as:

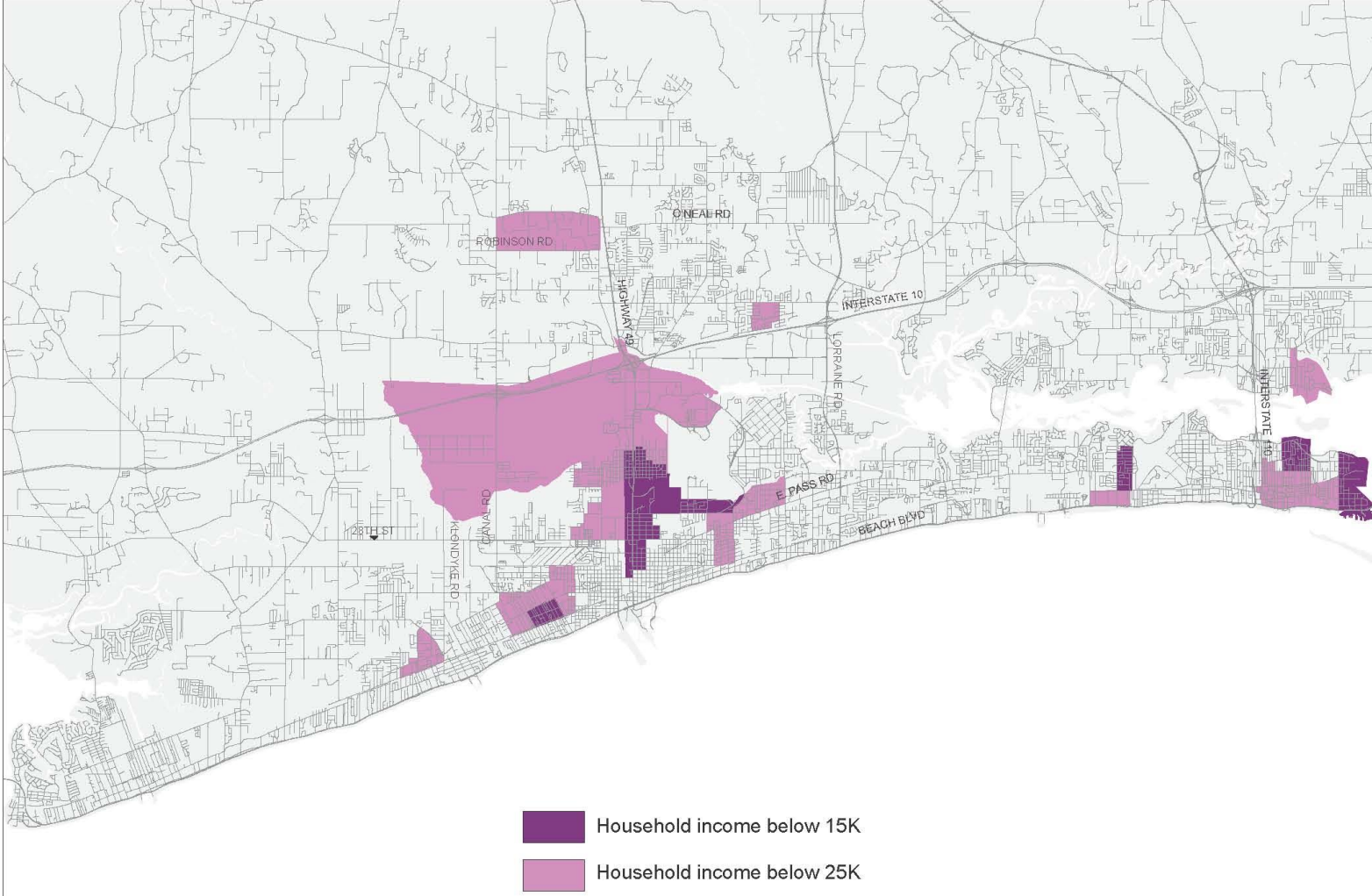
- Black (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa).
- Hispanic (a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, etc.) Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- Asian American (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands).
- American Indian or Alaskan Native (a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition).
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander - a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands

### *Low-Income*

The FHWA Order defines "low-income" as "a person whose household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines." Using this standard, the MPO mapped low-income households (\$25,000 or less annual income), and extremely low-income households (\$15,000 or less annually) by block group in each county.

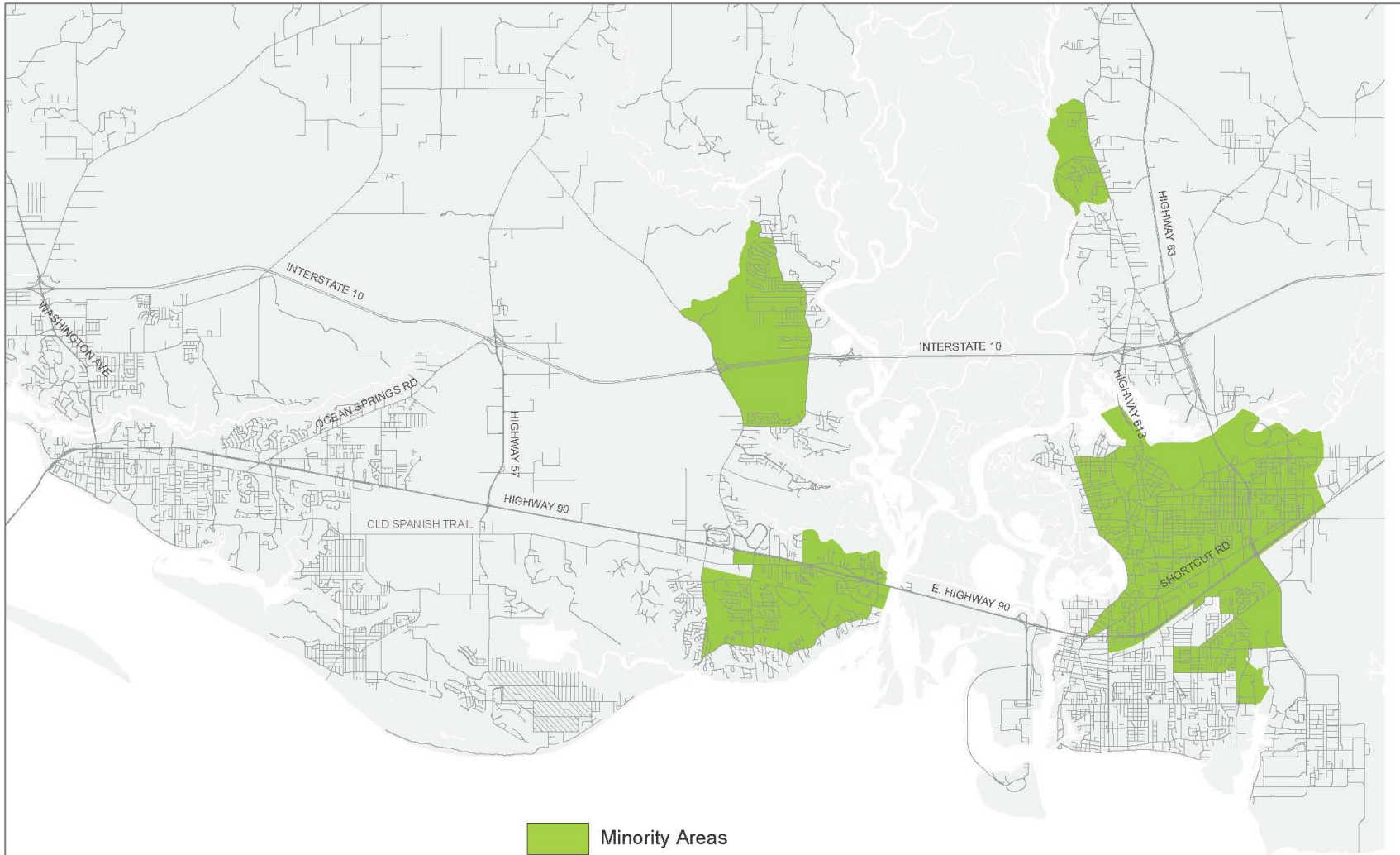


Harrison County Minority Areas



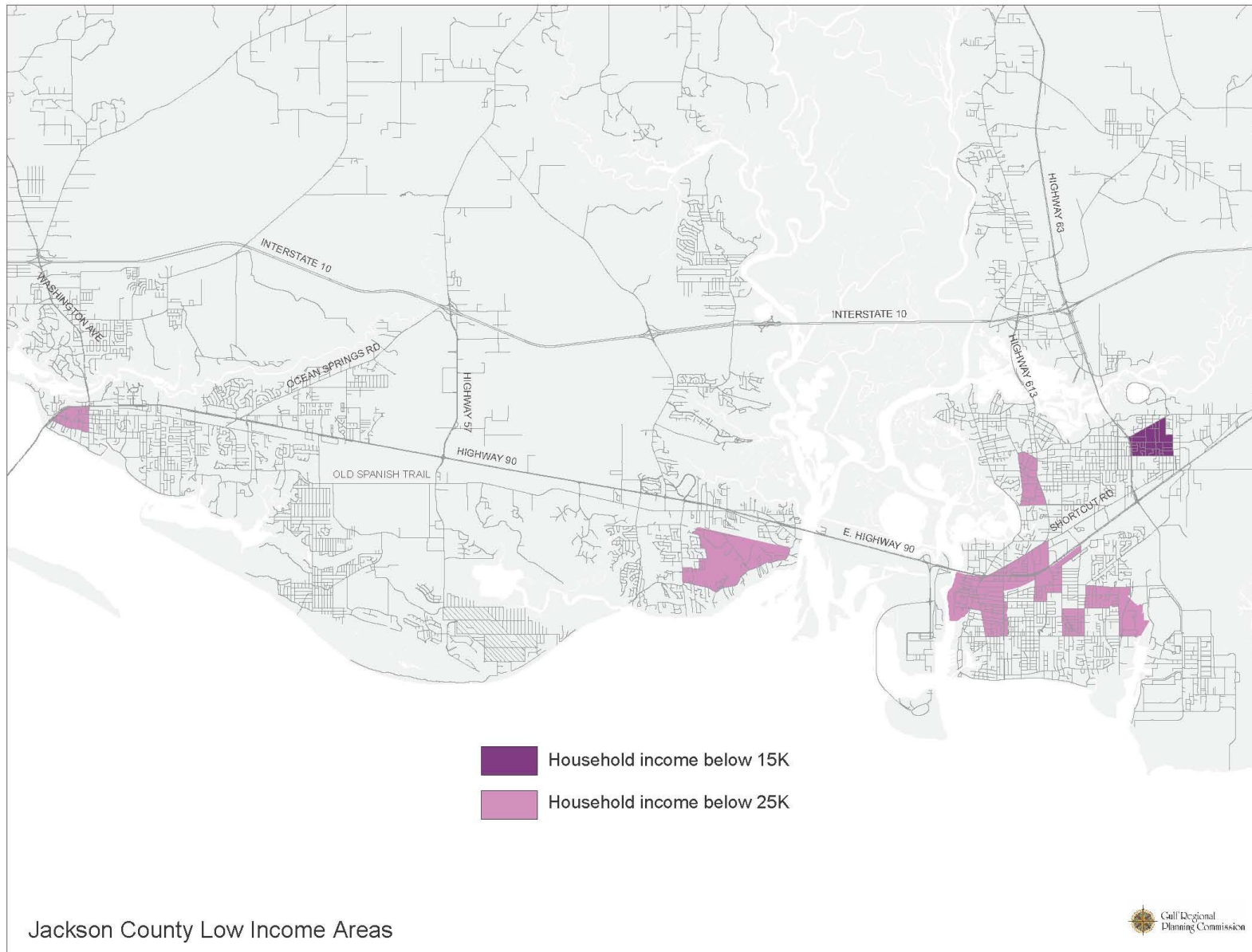
Harrison County Low Income Areas

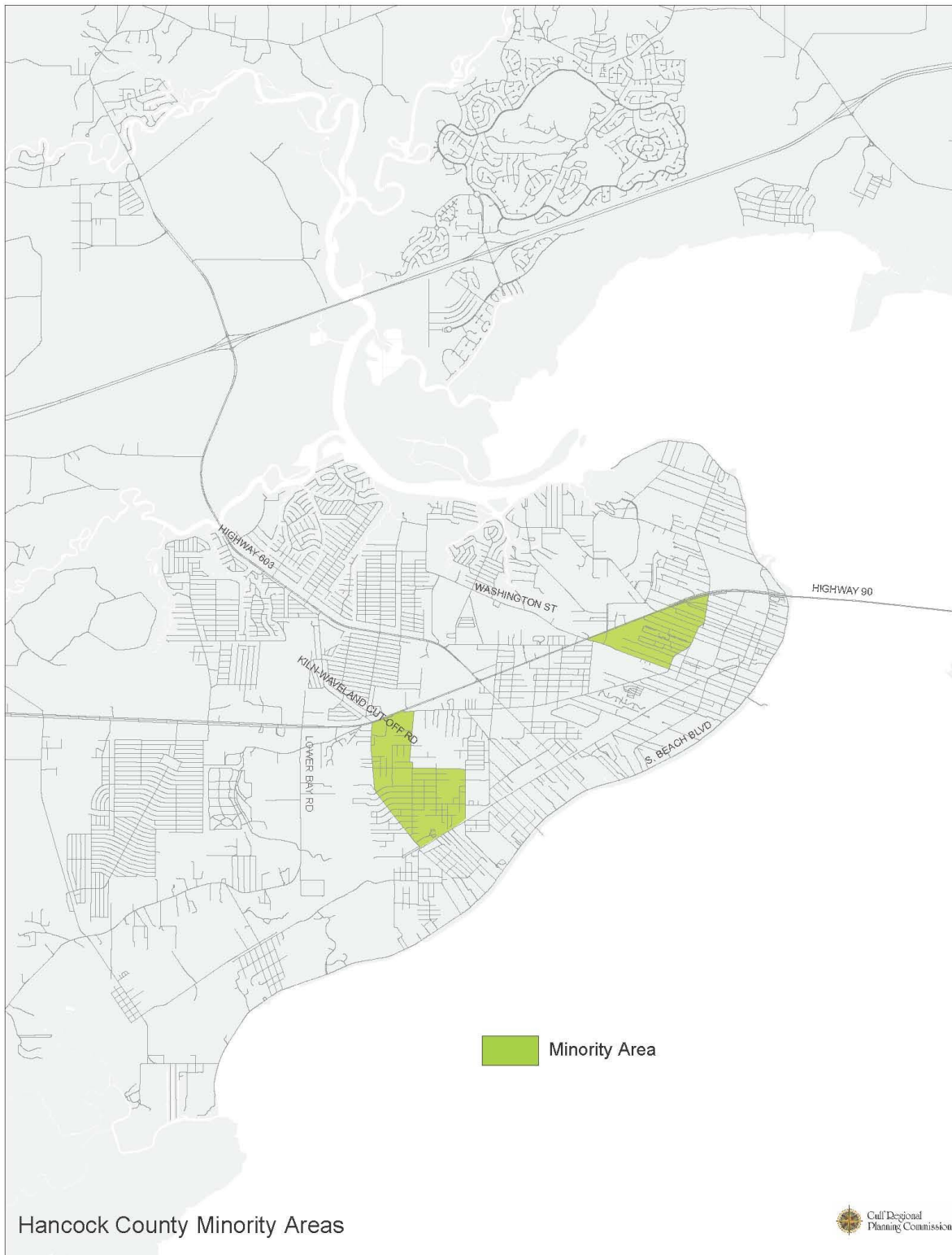




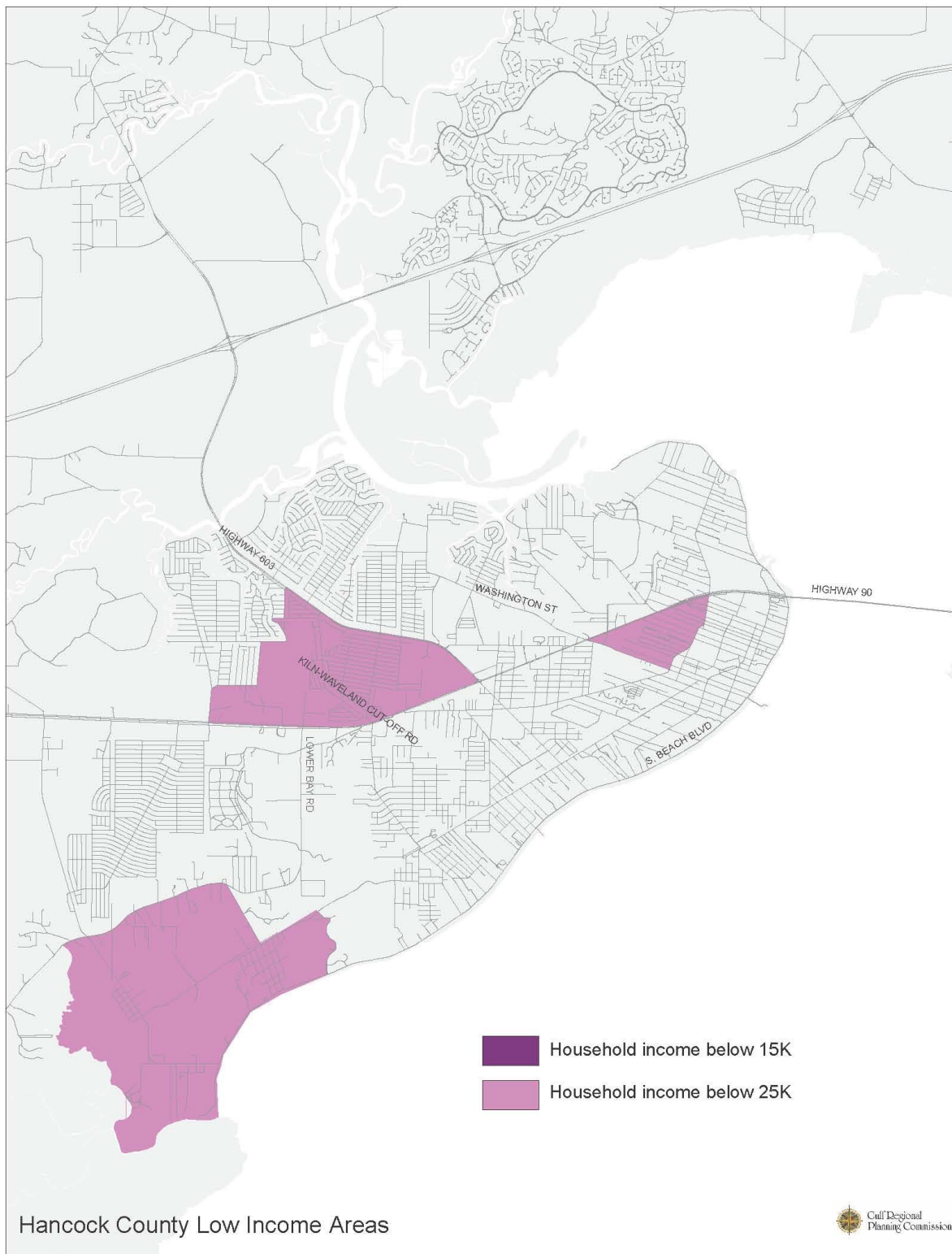
Jackson County Minority Areas











# Disadvantaged Businesses (DBE)

As a recipient of federal financial assistance, Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC), the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), works to ensure that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) have an equitable opportunity to participate in federally-assisted contracts generated through the agency. GRPC follows the guidelines contained within the Mississippi Department of Transportation's (MDOT) DBE program and works in support of the state's DBE goal.

## Definitions (43 CFR 26.7)

**Disadvantaged Business** means a small business that;

- A. Is at least 51% owned by one or more socially or economically disadvantaged individual(s), OR in the case of a publicly traded company, at least 51% of its stock is owned by one or more socially or economically disadvantaged individual(s), and
- B. The businesses management and daily operations are controlled by one or more of the socially or economically disadvantaged individuals who own it

Note: Absentee ownership or title ownership by an individual who does not take an active role in controlling the business is not consistent with the eligibility requirements for DBE status.

**DBE Discrimination** is defined in two categories.

- A. No person/business shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise discriminated against in connection with the award and performance of a federally assisted contract based on race, color, sex, national origin (or other protected status.)
- B. In administering your DBE program, you must not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, use criteria or methods of administration that have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the program with respect to individuals of a particular race, color, sex, or national origin.

## Policy Statements

### MDOT POLICY:

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Transportation to provide a level playing field, to foster equal opportunity in all federally assisted contracts, to improve the flexibility of the DBE program, to reduce the burdens on small businesses, and to achieve that amount of participation that would be obtained in a non-discriminatory market place. In doing so, it is the policy of GRPC/MPO that there will be no discrimination in the award and performance of federally assisted contracts on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability or other protected status.

### GRPC POLICY:

Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC), the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), works in support of the program goals and complies with the procedural guidance outlined in the Mississippi Department of Transportation's DBE Program. GRPC will take all necessary and reasonable steps to ensure that DBE firms have an equal opportunity to compete for and participate in federally assisted contracts executed by the agency. Each contract will contain non-discrimination language that is

consistent with the requirements of 43 CFR 26.

## GRPC Contract Language

Every contract executed by GRPC, in its capacity as the MPO or another agency function, will include the following non-discrimination language, or its near equivalent.

*ANTI-DISCRIMINATION - The Consultant and its subcontractors, if any, shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment, to be employed in the performance of this Agreement, with respect to its hire, tenure, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of his/her race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, handicap, age, disabled veteran status or Vietnam era veteran status. Breach of this covenant may be regarded as a material breach of this Agreement. If available, the Consultant shall provide their internally adopted non-discrimination language for review prior to contracting.*

*UTILIZATION OF DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE FIRMS - In connection with the performance of this Agreement, the Consultant will cooperate with GRPC in meeting its commitments and goals with regard to the maximum utilization of disadvantaged business enterprises, and will use its best effort to ensure that disadvantaged business enterprises shall have the maximum practicable opportunity to compete for sub-contract work under this contract.*

*Failure to comply with these requirements is a material breach of the contract the may result in the termination of the contract or such remedy as deemed appropriate by GRPC.*

# Participation Program Evaluation

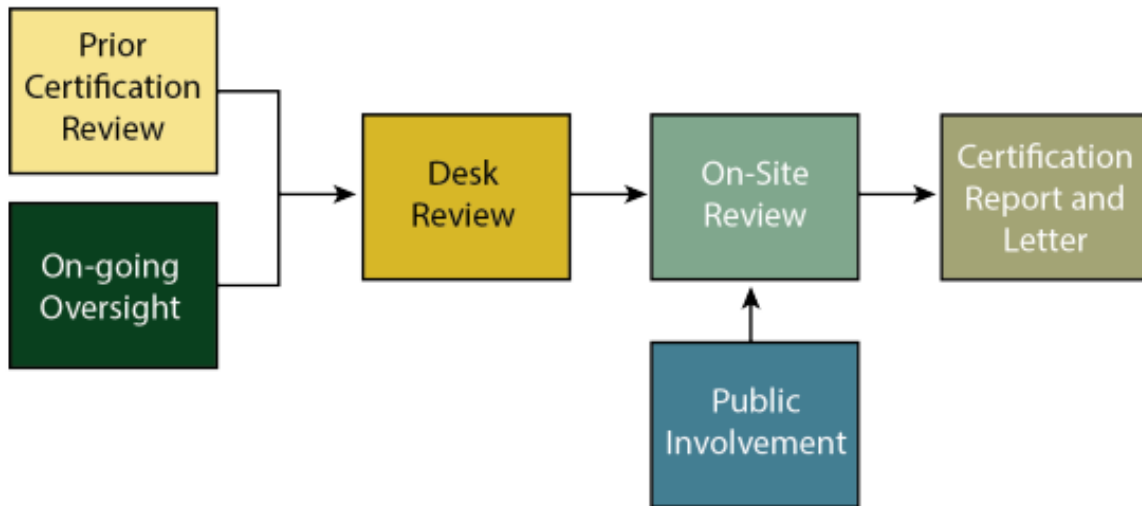
## Internal Program Assessments

The Public Involvement/Title VI Coordinator is responsible for assessing the Public Participation and Non-discrimination programs for GRPC/MS Gulf Coast MPO. Reviews will be conducted, at minimum, annually to assess tool and strategy effectiveness, financial feasibility, compliance with regulations, to align with new guidance and otherwise assess program performance.

In addition to regular staff assessments of the participation plan and the strategies contained within, the MPO also completes an annual self-certification. The certification is an assurance to US DOT and MDOT that the MPO is acting in compliance with applicable non-discrimination law, rules and regulations.

## External Program Assessments

Every four years the MPO demonstrates program compliance through a Transportation Management Area (TMA) certification review process. The review is conducted jointly by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. The requirements for certification reviews are included in the US Code of Federal Regulations, 40 CFR 450.334. Certification reviews are rigorous and detailed audits of the MPO planning processes. They are conducted over a 2-3 day period, include opportunities for public input and result in a certification report. Stages of the review process include:



**Figure 1 Certification Review Process Components**

It is important that members of the public understand that their participation is an important component of the metropolitan planning process and can influence the decision-making process and selection of transportation investments. There is a Federal requirement that the public have an opportunity to participate in the Certification Review process.

In addition to public involvement during the On-Site Review, in meetings organized by the Federal Review Team, there are other opportunities for the public to provide input for the Certification Review. Stakeholder groups, elected officials, and other members of the public may meet separately with the Federal Review Team, comment directly to the FHWA and FTA by mail, email, or telephone, or in some cases comment through an MPO website or other appropriate social media venue when coordinated and agreed to in advance with the Federal Review Team.

#### **Considerations for a Successful Public Participation Process**

- Employ active efforts to encourage public involvement
- Demonstrate importance of public involvement during key stages of metropolitan transportation planning process, including:
  - Meetings with the MPO Policy Board, advisory committees, and staff;
  - Discussions on public participation, MTP, TIP, and other topics;
  - The Federal Certification’s public outreach component
- Ensure potentially affected individuals have opportunity to participate in decision-making
- Ensure concerns of all participants will be considered

#### **Considerations for a Successful Civil Rights Process**

- Include analysis procedures of regional data to identify minority, low-income, and/or LEP population concentrations and issues
- Establish and implement reasonable standards, measures and benchmarks,
- Monitor activities of regional transportation agencies to assess compliance with requirements, including whether the regional transportation system services are accessible

# Appendix A: GRPC/MPO Contacts

Gulf Regional Planning Commission  
MS Gulf Coast MPO

Office Address:  
1635-G Popps Ferry Road,  
Biloxi MS 39532

Phone #1: 228-864-1167  
Phone #2: 228-207-7380  
Fax #: 228-867-1149  
Email: [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com)

General information and inquiries should be directed to:

Staff Person	Position Title	Phone Extension
Stephanie Plancich	Public Involvement & Title VI Coordinator	218

Other Staff Contacts:

Staff Person	Position Title	Phone Extension
Paul Gavin	Executive Director	207
David Taylor	Planning Director	209
Kenneth Yarrow	Planning Manager	226
Ken Holland	GIS/Senior Planner	213
Jeff Loftus	Planning Administrator	211
David Sauls	GIS/Mapping Specialist	206
Jason Zimmer	Transit Planner	210
Ryan Frazier	Traffic Count Technician	224

# Appendix B: Required Language

## Required Language in Publications

The MPO is required, depending on the type of document being drafted, to include specific statements for public awareness. This language assures the public of our commitment to non-discrimination, identifies the agency or agencies that provided funding and/or other support.

### **Non-Discrimination Assurance:**

GRPC prohibits discrimination in its programs, services and activities. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or other protected status. Persons who require assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the MPO at least five (5) business days prior to the any scheduled meeting, event or the end of a public review and comment period. Contact Stephanie Planchich at 228-864-1167 or by email to [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com) with any requests, questions or comments.

### **Notation of Financial Assistance:**

This document was prepared and published by the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in cooperation with or with financial assistance from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and/or the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). Assistance notwithstanding, the contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official view or policies of the funding agencies.

### **FTA 5307 Notice**

When GRPC publishes legal notices, and that activity or document includes all or in part, information on Coast Transit Authority (CTA) projects, FTA requires this statement be added:

Included in this activity/document is information regarding Coast Transit Authority's Program of Projects funded by the Federal Transit Administration. This public meeting/comment period satisfies the public participation requirements of FTA Section 5307 POP notice. The proposed CTA Program of Projects will be final unless revised as a result of public comment.

### **Regular MPO Meeting Notice**

In accordance with 23 CFR 450, Gulf Regional Planning Commission, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization, is providing public notice that it's next Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) meeting is scheduled for November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 1635-G Popps Ferry Road, Biloxi. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. The agenda focuses on our region's federally funded transportation planning process, including management of the Transportation Improvement Program and Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan. GRPC prohibits discrimination in all of its programs, services and activities. Participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or other protected status. Persons who require assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the MPO at 228-864-1167 or [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com) at least five (5) business days before this scheduled event.



# Appendix C: 23 CFR 450.316

## (Public Participation Guidance)

### §450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;

(2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201-204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.

[81 FR 34135, May 27, 2016, as amended at 81 FR 93473, Dec. 20, 2016; 82 FR 56544, Nov. 29, 2017]

# Appendix D: Non-Discrimination Policy & Annual Self-Certification



## Title VI / Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

The Gulf Regional Planning Commission's Non-Discrimination Title VI Policy Statement is listed below. The policy covers the programs and activities of the Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) which is the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the three coastal counties of Mississippi. The GRPC and the MPO provide the required assurances to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that the MPO's transportation planning processes will comply with Title VI, as required by Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200, and Title 49 CFP Part 21.

### Policy Statement


Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC), herein after called the "Agency," commits to and assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, or other protected class, as provided by the Federal Highway Act of 1973, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.

The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 expanded the scope of Title VI by requiring that all programs, services or activities of a federal aid recipient, sub-recipient, contractor or consultant comply with applicable non-discrimination authorities whether such programs receive direct federal financial assistance or not.


In the event the Agency distributes federal aid funds to a sub-recipient, Title VI language will be included in all executed written agreements and will be monitored for compliance.

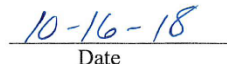
The Agency's Title VI/Civil Rights Coordinator initiates and monitors the Agency's non-discrimination program and activities, including preparing reports, reviewing and updating the Public Participation Plan and Civil Rights Plan as well as completing other responsibilities as described in the Coordinator position description and as required by 23 CFR 200 and 49 CFR 21.

The Agency's Executive Director is responsible for overall compliance of the Agency in meeting its various non-discrimination Title VI obligations and is authorized to sign this assurance on behalf of the Agency.

  
Paul Gavin  
Executive Director  
Gulf Regional Planning Commission

  
Date

  
Stephanie Planolich  
Title VI/Civil Rights Coordinator  
Gulf Regional Planning Commission

  
Date




#### MPO ANNUAL SELF-CERTIFICATION

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.336, the STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION and the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Gulfport-Biloxi and Pascagoula urbanized areas hereby certifies that the transportation planning process is addressing the major issues in the State and is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of:

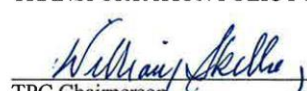
- (1) 23 U.S.C. 134, 49 U.S.C. 5303, and this subpart;
- (2) In nonattainment and maintenance areas, sections 174 and 176(c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7504, 7506(c) and (d)) and 40 CFR part 93;
- (3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) and 49 CFR part 21;
- (4) 49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity;
- (5) Section 1101(b) of the FAST Act (Pub. L. 114-357) and 49 CFR part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in DOT funded projects;
- (6) 23 CFR part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts;
- (7) The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*) and 49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38;
- (8) The Older Americans Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance;
- (9) Section 324 of title 23 U.S.C. regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender; and
- (10) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and 49 CFR part 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

STATE DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State Planning Engineer

12/9/2016  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
TPC Chairperson

12/8/16  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Appendix E: Non-Discrimination Forms

English and Spanish Notices of public rights under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

**Notifying the Public of Rights Under Title VI**  
**Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) and the**  
**Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

- GRPC and the MPO operate its programs, activities and services without regard to race, color or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes he or she has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with GRPC.
- For more information on GRPC's civil rights program, and the procedures to file a complaint, contact 228-864-1167 x218 or email [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com). You may also visit our office at 1232 Pass Road, Gulfport MS 39501.
- A complainant may be filed directly with the Federal Transit Administration by filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Civil Rights Coordinator, 230 Peachtree NW #800, Atlanta GA 30303.
- If information is needed in another language, contact 228-864-1167 x218 to make the request.

**Notificación al Público de los Derechos Bajo el Título VI**  
**Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) and the**  
**Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

- GRPC y MPO opera sus programas y servicios sin distinción de raza, color ó nacionalidad, de conformidad con el Título VI del Acta de Derechos Civiles. Cualquier persona que cree que él ó ella ha sido perjudicada por una práctica discriminatoria ilegal bajo el Título VI, puede presentar una queja ante la GRPC.
- Para obtener más información sobre el programa de derechos civiles GRPC, y los procedimientos para presentar una queja, comuníquese con 228-864-1167 x218; [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com) correo electrónico ó visite nuestra oficina administrativa en 1232 Pass Road, Gulfport MS 39501.
- Una queja puede ser presentada directamente ante la Administración Federal de Tránsito mediante la presentación de una queja ante la Oficina de Derechos Civiles, Atención: Coordinador del Título VI, 230 Peachtree NW # 800, Atlanta GA 30303.
- Si se necesita información en otro idioma, comuníquese con 228-864-1167 x218 para hacer la solicitud.



## **Title VI Statement of Policy**

Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC), the MS Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to conform to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its amendments. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that no person in the United States, shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Presidential Executive Order 12898 addresses Environmental Justice in minority and low-income populations. Presidential Executive Order 13166 addresses services to those individuals with Limited English Proficiency. The rights of women, the elderly and the disabled are protected under related statutes. These Presidential Executive Orders and the related statutes fall under the umbrella of Title VI.

GRPC is committed to enforcing the provisions of Title VI and protecting the rights and opportunities of all persons associated with GRPC or affected by its programs. This commitment includes vigorously enforcing all applicable laws and regulations that affect GRPC and those organizations, both public and private, which participate and benefit through GRPC's programs. GRPC will take positive and realistic affirmative steps to ensure that all persons and/or firms wishing to participate in its programs are given an equal and equitable chance to participate. All sub-recipients and contractors are required to prevent discrimination and ensure nondiscrimination in all their programs, activities and services.

GRPC's Executive Director is responsible for providing leadership, direction and policy to ensure compliance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Any person(s) or firm(s) who feels that they have been discriminated against is encouraged to report such violations in writing to GRPC at:

**Mailed to:**

Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC)  
1635-G Popps Ferry Road,  
Biloxi MS 39532

**Or emailed to:**

[contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com)





## Title VI Complaint Procedures

This procedure outlines the Title VI complaint procedures related to providing programs, services, and benefits. It does not deny the complainant the right to file formal complaints with the Secretary of the US Department of Transportation, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), or to seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination, intimidation, or retaliation of any kind that is prohibited by law.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

1. Any person who believes that they have been subjected to discrimination may file a written complaint with Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC). Complaints should be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged incident.
2. The complainant may download the complaint form from the GRPC website ([www.grpc.com](http://www.grpc.com)) or request a complaint form from the GRPC Public Involvement Coordinator at: Phone : 228-864-1167 or by emailing [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com).
3. The complainant may also submit a written statement that contains the following information:
  - a. Name, address, and telephone number of the complainant.
  - b. The basis of the complaint i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, elderly or disabled.
  - c. The date or dates on which the alleged discriminatory event or events occurred.
  - d. The nature of the incident that led the complainant to feel discrimination was a factor.
  - e. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of persons who may have knowledge of the event.
  - f. Other agencies or courts where complaint may have been filed and a contact name.
  - g. Complainant's signature and date.
  - h. If the complainant is unable to write a complaint, GRPC staff will assist the complainant.
  - i. The complaint may be sent to the following address:

Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC)  
1635-G Popps Ferry Road, Biloxi MS 39532  
The complaint may be sent via email to: [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com)
4. The complainant also has the right to file a Title VI claim with the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Office of Civil Rights-Region IV, 230 Peachtree, NW, Suite 800, Atlanta, GA 30303, **within** the 180 day timeframe.
5. GRPC will begin an investigation within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of a complaint.
6. GRPC will contact the complainant in writing no later than thirty (30) working days after receipt of complaint for additional information, if needed to investigate the complaint. If the complainant fails to provide the requested information in a timely basis, GRPC may administratively close the complaint.
7. GRPC will use its best effort to complete the investigation of Title VI complaints within ninety (90) days of receipt of the complaint. A written investigation report will be prepared by the investigator. The report shall include a summary description of the incident, findings, and recommendations for disposition.



## TITLE VI COMPLAINT FORM – GULF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Individuals or organizations who believe they have been denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or subject to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin by a recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding can file an administrative complaint under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance".

This protection and same opportunity to file a complaint extends to the public through Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations," and the Department of Transportation's Guidance to Recipients on Special Language Services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Beneficiaries.

Individuals and organizations may file a complaint by completing and submitting the following Title VI complaint form. Assistance is available upon request. Complaints must be signed and include contact information and should be sent via mail or delivered to: Gulf Regional Planning Commission, 1635-G Popps Ferry Road, Biloxi MS 39532 or emailed to [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com).

1. Complainant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Address: \_\_\_\_\_
3. City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Telephone No. (Home): \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Business: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ TDD/Other: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf? *(check the appropriate box)*  
☐ Yes *(go to question 10)*      ☐ No
7. If No, please give us the following information on the person discriminated against:  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Relationship to Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which of the following best describes why you think the discrimination took place? Was it because of your:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Race/Color (Title VI) <input type="checkbox"/> National Origin (Title VI) <input type="checkbox"/> Low Income (Executive Order 12898) <input type="checkbox"/> Limited English Proficiency (Executive Order 13166)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex/Gender (Title VI) <input type="checkbox"/> Age (Age Discrimination Act of 1967) <input type="checkbox"/> Minority Status (Executive Order 12898) <input type="checkbox"/> Disability (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 & Rehabilitation Act of 1973)
--	---

9. What date did the alleged discrimination take place? : \_\_\_\_\_

10. In your own words, describe the alleged discrimination. Explain what happened and whom you believe was responsible.  
Please attach additional sheets of paper if more space is required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Have you filed this complaint with any other federal, state or local agency, or with any federal or state court?  
(check appropriate box) [ ] Yes [ ] No

If answer is yes, check each box that applies:

<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Agency
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Court	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State Agency	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> State Court	_____

Please provide contact person's information for the agency or court you also filed the complaint with (*attach more sheets if necessary*):

Name/Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Filed: \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Please sign below. You may attach materials or other information that you think is relevant to your complaint.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: We cannot accept your complaint without a signature, Thank You!)

Submit your written and signed complaint in person or by mail to:

1635-G popps Ferry Road, Biloxi MS 39532

Or scan and email a copy to: [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com)



## Título VI Declaración de Pólizas

Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC), un beneficiario del subsidio federal, es requerido por la Administración Federal de Tránsito (FTA) para cumplir con el Título VI del AGRPC de Derechos Civiles de 1964 y sus enmiendas. Título VI del AGRPC de Derechos Civiles de 1964 requiere que ninguna persona en los Estados Unidos podrá, por motivos de raza, color u origen nacional, sea excluido de, negado los beneficios de, ó sea sujeto a discriminación bajo cualquier programa ó actividad que reciba asistencia financiera federal. Orden Ejecutiva Presidencial 12898 aborda la justicia ambiental en poblaciones minoritarias y de bajos ingresos. Orden Ejecutiva Presidencial 13166 aborda los servicios a las personas con dominio limitado del inglés. Los derechos de las mujeres, los ancianos y los discapacitados están protegidos por las leyes correspondientes. Estas órdenes ejecutivas presidenciales y de los estatutos relacionados caen bajo el del Título VI.

GRPC se compromete a cumplir las disposiciones del Título VI y la protección de los derechos y oportunidades de todas las personas relacionadas con la GRPC ó afeGRPCdos por sus programas. Este compromiso incluye vigorosamente la aplicación de todas las leyes y reglamentos que afeGRPCn a GRPC y esas organizaciones, tanto públicas como privadas, que participan y se benefician a través de programas del GRPC. GRPC tomará medidas afirmativas positivas y realistas para asegurar que todas las personas y / ó empresas que deseen participar en sus programas se les dé una oportunidad igual y equitativa para participar. Todos los sub-beneficiarios y contratistas tienen la obligación de prevenir la discriminación y garantizar la no discriminación en todos sus programas, actividades y servicios.

El Director Ejecutivo de la GRPC es responsable de proporcionar liderazgo, dirección y pólizas para asegurar el cumplimiento con el Título VI del AGRPC de Derechos Civiles de 1964. Cualquier persona (s) ó empresa (s) que siente que ha sido discriminado se anima a informar tales violaciones a GRPC a: Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC), 1635-G Poppys Ferry Road, Biloxi MS 39532, [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com).

### Título VI Procedimientos de Quejas

Este procedimiento describe los procedimientos del Título VI de quejas relacionadas con los programas que ofrecen, servicios y beneficios. No niega al demandante el derecho a presentar quejas formales ante el Secretario del Departamento de Transporte de EE.UU., Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Administración Federal de Carreteras (FHWA), Administración Federal de Tránsito (FTA), ó buscar un abogado privado para denuncias de discriminación, intimidación ó represalia de ningún tipo que está prohibido por la ley Título VI del AGRPC de Derechos Civiles de 1964 requiere que ninguna persona en los Estados Unidos, por motivos de raza, color u origen nacional, sea excluido de, negado los beneficios de, ó sea sujeto a discriminación bajo cualquier programa ó actividad que reciba asistencia financiera federal.

1. Cualquier persona que crea que ha sido objeto de discriminación puede presentar una queja por escrito ante Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC). Las quejas deben ser presentadas dentro de los 180 días siguientes alegados al incidente.
2. El demandante puede descargar el formulario de queja por medio de GRPC ([www.grpc.com](http://www.grpc.com)) ó solicitar el formulario de quejas del Director Ejecutivo. Asimismo, el demandante puede presentar una declaración escrita que contenga toda la información que se indica en la Sección 3 A á la F.3.

3. La denuncia incluirá la siguiente información:
  - a. Nombre, dirección y número de teléfono del denunciante.
  - b. La base de la denuncia, es decir, color, raza, origen nacional, sexo, edad ó discapacitadas
  - c. La fecha ó fechas en que el presunto acto discriminatorio ó hechos.
  - d. La naturaleza del incidente que llevó al autor a sentir la discriminación que fue un factor.
  - e. Nombres, direcciones y números telefónicos de las personas que puedan tener conocimiento del evento.
  - f. Otros organismos ó tribunales donde denuncia haya sido presentada y un nombre de contacto.
  - g. Firma del demandante y la fecha.
  - h. Si el demandante no puede escribir una queja, GRPC asistirá al demandante.
  - i. La queja puede ser enviada vía correo electrónico a: [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com)
  - j. La denuncia podrá ser enviada a la siguiente dirección:

Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC)  
1635-G Popps Ferry Road, Biloxi MS 39532  
228-864-1167
4. Asimismo, el demandante tiene derecho a presentar una reclamación Título VI con el Departamento de Transporte de EE.UU., Federal Transit Administration, Office of Civil Rights, IV Región. 230 Peachtree, NW, Suite 800, Atlanta, GA 30303, dentro del plazo de 180 días.
5. GRPC se iniciará una investigación dentro de los quince (15) días hábiles siguientes a la recepción de una queja.
6. GRPC se pondrá en contacto con el demandante por escrito no más tarde de treinta (30) días hábiles siguientes a la recepción de la comunicación para obtener información adicional, si es necesario para investigar la denuncia. Si el demandante no proporciona la información solicitada en forma oportuna, GRPC administrativamente puede cerrar la queja.
7. GRPC hará uso de su mejor esfuerzo para completar la investigación del Título VI quejas dentro de los noventa (90) días siguientes a la recepción de la queja. Un informe de investigación escrito será preparado por el investigador. El informe incluirá un resumen descriptivo de los hechos, las conclusiones y las recomendaciones para su disposición.



## Gulf Regional Planning Commission

### Título VI Formulario para Quejas- Gulf Regional Planning Commission

Las personas u organizaciones que creen que se les ha negado los beneficios de, excluidos de participar en, ó sujetos a discriminación por motivos de raza, color u origen nacional de un recipiente de la Administración Federal de Tránsito (FTA) de financiación puede presentar una queja administrativa con respecto al Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964. Título VI del AGRPC de Derechos Civiles de 1964 establece que "Ninguna persona en los Estados Unidos, por motivos de raza, color u origen nacional, sea excluida de participar en, sea negado los beneficios de, o sea sujeto a discriminación bajo cualquier programa ó actividad que reciba asistencia federal".

Esta protección y oportunidad igual para presentar una queja se extiende al público a través de la Orden Ejecutiva 12898, "Acciones federales para abordar la justicia ambiental en poblaciones minoritarias y de bajos ingresos", y el Departamento de Orientación de Transporte a los recipientes de Servicios especiales sobre el lenguaje para Dominio Limitado del Inglés (LEP) Beneficiarios.

Los individuos y las organizaciones pueden presentar una queja llenando y enviando el siguiente formulario de queja Título VI. La ayuda está disponible a petición. Las quejas deben ser firmadas é incluyendo información de contacto y deben ser enviados por correo o entregados a: Gulf Regional Planning Commission, 1232 Pass Road, Gulfport, MS 39501. Alternativamente, se puede enviar por fax al 228/864-1149 ó por correo electrónico a [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com).

1. Nombre del Querellante: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Dirección: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Pueblo \_\_\_\_\_ Estado: \_\_\_\_\_ Código: \_\_\_\_\_

4. No. de Teléfono (Casa): \_\_\_\_\_ Cel.: \_\_\_\_\_ Trabajo: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Correo Electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_ Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Se está quejando por sí mismo? (Marque el apropiado) [ ] Si (vaya a la pregunta #10) [ ] No

7. Si No, denos la información a quien discriminaron en contra:

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección: \_\_\_\_\_

Pueblo: \_\_\_\_\_ Estado: \_\_\_\_\_ Código: \_\_\_\_\_

Teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_ Correo Electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_

Relación al Querellante: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Cuál de las siguientes mejor describe come discriminaron en contra del querellante y porque piensa que discriminaron en contra del querellante? Fue por?

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Raza/Color

Origen de Nacionalidad

Bajos Ingresos

Limite del Ingles

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Sexo

Disabilidad

Edad

Condición de minoría

9. Fecha en que discriminaron? : \_\_\_\_\_



10. En sus propias palabras describa la alegación de discriminación. Explique qué paso, y quien usted piensa que fue responsable. Por favor una más hojas de papel si el espacio no es bastante si lo requiere.

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11. A usted apelado dicha querella con cualquier otra agencia federal, estado local ó cortes federales ó estatales? *(Marque el apropiado)* [ ] Si [ ] No

Si es Si, marque las cajas que le corresponda:

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

Agencia Federal  
Corte Federal  
Agencia del Estado  
Corte del Estado

☐  
☐

Agencia Local  
Otro:

---

---

Sírvanse proporcionar información sobre la persona de la agencia ó tribunal en donde usted también presentó la queja. (Una más hojas si es necesario):

Nombre de Agencia: \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección: \_\_\_\_\_

Pueblo: \_\_\_\_\_ Estado: \_\_\_\_\_ Código: \_\_\_\_\_

Teléfono.: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha de queja: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Por Favor firme. Usted puede unir más hojas ó cualquier otra información si le es necesario para su queja.

Firme: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Nota No Podemos aceptar su queja sin la firma. Muchas Gracias!)*

La queja puede ser enviada vía correo electrónico a: [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com). La denuncia podrá ser enviada a la siguiente dirección: Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC)  
Public Involvement/Title VI Coordinator  
1635-G Popps Ferry Road, Biloxi MS 39532

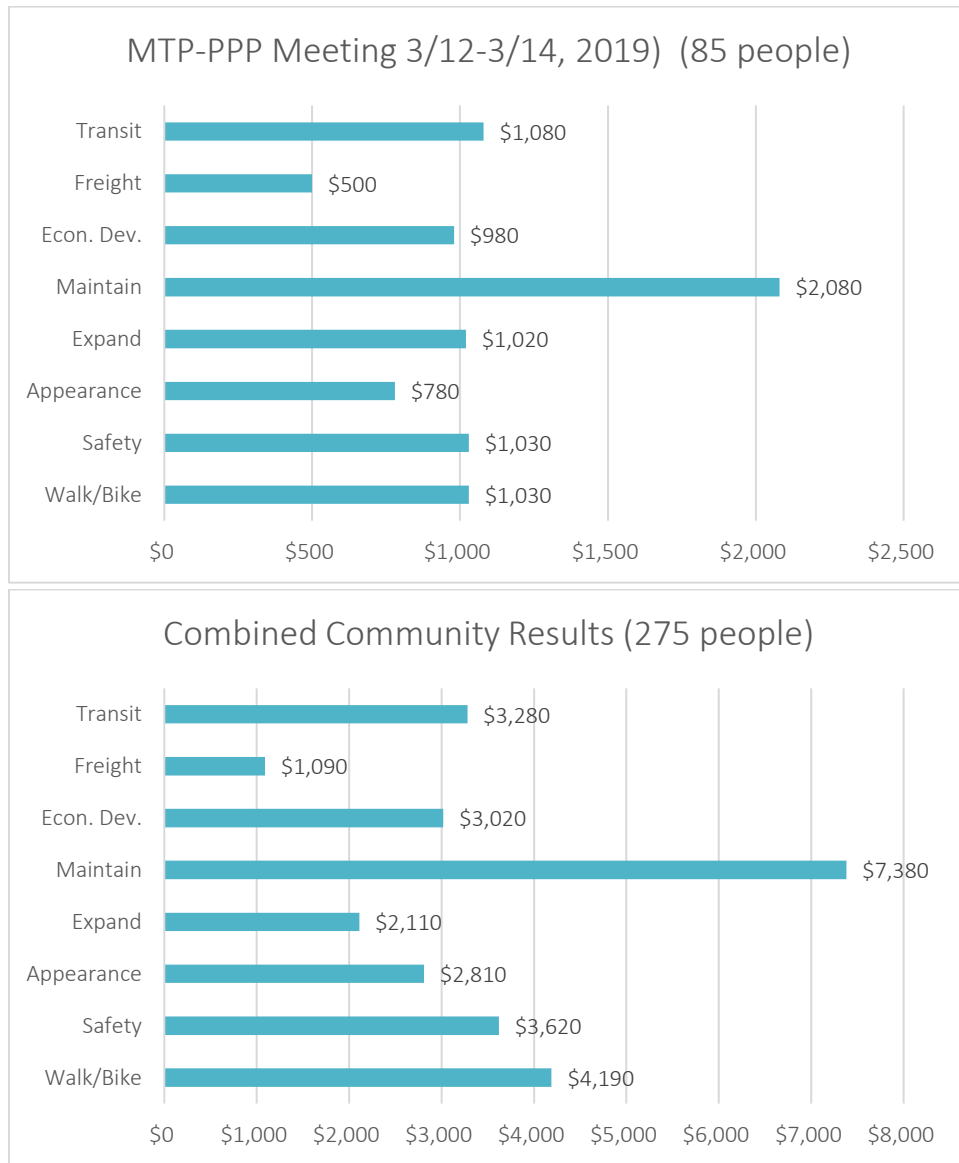
# Appendix F: Public Outreach Materials

Included in this Appendix are copies of the online and print notices offering opportunity for members of the public to view and comment on the Draft PPP. The review period ran from February 15-March 31, 2019. No written comments were received; however, we did complete two surveys during joint PPP/MTP meetings Held March 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>. Survey #1 captured feedback on the methods our community members prefer to get and give feedback. Survey #2 asks participants to allocate limited transportation dollars into 8 transportation funding categories. The results will help us incorporate public priorities into the long-range planning process as well as help ensure that public opinion is deeply incorporated in the project selection process.

## Survey #1 – Public Engagement preferences



## Survey #2 - \$100 Priorities Results

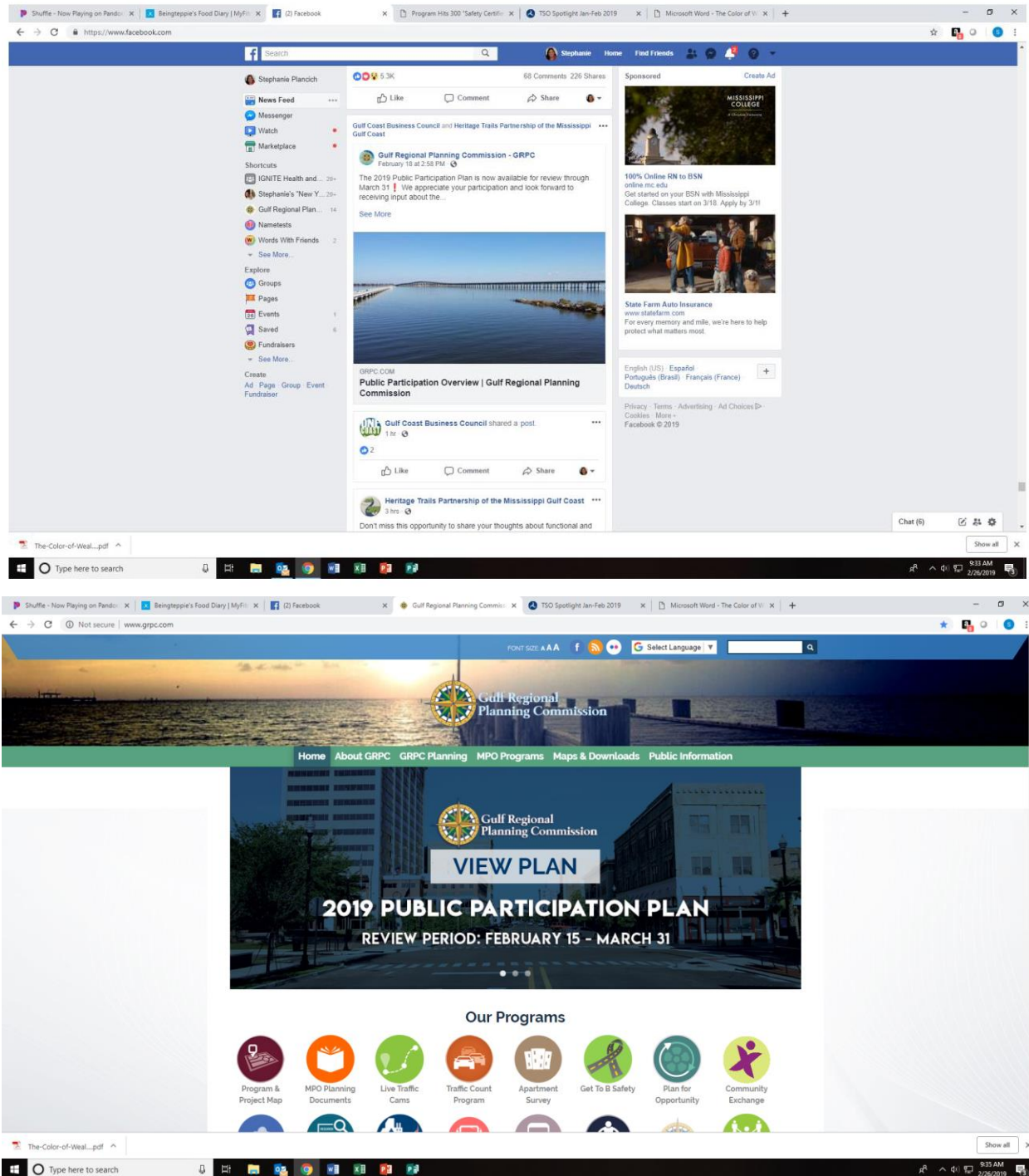


Maintaining and improving our existing roadways is a significant priority for the community at-large as well as those who attended our March 2019 meetings. This survey will continue to be implemented Coast wide for the full 2 year MTP planning process to provide quality guidance for MPO staff in finalizing TIP processes and our long-range goals and objectives.

Photos of our meeting signage, survey stations and some participants.



## Facebook and Website Screen Shots





Shuffle - Now Playing on Pandora | Beingspie's Food Diary | MyFi | Facebook | Public Participation Overview | TSO Spotlight Jan-Feb 2019 | Microsoft Word - The Color of |

Not secure | www.grpc.com/public-info/

Font Size: A A A | Select Language |

**Gulf Regional Planning Commission**

Home About GRPC GRPC Planning MPO Programs Maps & Downloads Public Information

## Public Participation Overview

The 2019 Public Participation Plan is now available for review from February 15th through March 31st, 2019

If you need ADA assistance to participate in any other MPO activity please contact us at least 5 business days before the end of the review period or event date by emailing or calling Stephanie at 228-864-1167 or [splanich@grpc.com](mailto:splanich@grpc.com)

[2019 DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN](#) | [PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/TITLE VI PLAN](#) | [SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS](#)

Public participation is a critical component of the transportation planning process and as such is a required plan document defined in 23 CFR450.316. "The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process." Agencies for consultation are defined as groups or agencies that would be interested in reviewing and making comment on the MPO's planning documents and programs and may be referred to as resource agencies.

GRPC understands that the input of all participating parties contributes to the regional transportation planning process. We seek to engage individuals with knowledge and insight about the transportation needs of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, with a pointed effort to involve members of traditionally underserved populations. These include: minorities, low-income, elderly, disabled, limited English proficiency and people with limited mobility. GRPC seeks to ensure environmental justice is duly considered in the development of projects and programs.

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is designed to serve as a guide for public engagement throughout the transportation planning process. There are many opportunities for the public to become involved in community decision-making. Some opportunities are required by federal law, while others are provided during additional GRPC program development. Engagement strategies utilized by GRPC are discussed in the following chapters.

This plan was developed in consultation with local, state and federal officials and includes input from the public. It was available for a 45-day public review period through various strategies prior to its adoption. All outreach and engagement efforts are recorded in the MPO Participation Database.

GRPC is required by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration to develop and maintain four MPO transportation documents. Each of them contains individual plans or projects to address the needs of the metropolitan planning area. In addition to the federally required programs, GRPC also participates in various technical studies that benefit from public input.

**The four required MPO transportation planning documents include:**

[1. The 2040 Metropolitan Long-Range Transportation Plan](#)  
[2. The Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#)  
[3. Unified Planning Work Program \(UPWP\)](#)  
[4. Public Participation Plan \(PPP\)](#)

### MPO public participation goals and objectives

**Public involvement and community outreach goals include:**

Inform Mississippi Gulf Coast residents and other interested parties about the regional transportation planning process as well as issues and changes related to transportation

Increase community awareness of GRPC's purpose and function, including its role as the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO

Engage Mississippi Gulf Coast residents and other interested parties in sustained dialogue about transportation planning

**GRPC public involvement and community outreach objectives include:**

Provide broad-based access to GRPC activities, plans, and programs through consistent and comprehensive public outreach activities

Develop and disseminate information about the transportation planning process through multiple educational and outreach strategies appropriate for all audiences

Seek to engage all interested parties, including traditionally underserved persons, in meaningful exchange of ideas related to the transportation planning process

Establish working relationships with organizations in the region with the purpose of information exchange and regional dialog

### Public Participation

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Join us for upcoming public meetings on the Gulf Coast! We are discussing the next phase of the long-range transportation plan called the "MULTIPLAN 2045". Each Open house meeting is scheduled from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

*Save the Date*  
**Tues. 3/12, 4-6pm**  
Jackson County Administration Building  
**Wed. 3/13, 4-6pm**  
Bay St Louis Community Hall  
**Thurs. 3/14, 4-6pm**  
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**PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE TONIGHT**  
**Thursday, March 14 - 4-6pm**  
**Gulf Regional Planning Commission**  
**1635-G Popps Ferry Rd, Biloxi**

We need your feedback on regional transportation needs, priorities, and goals. Share your thoughts on the long-range Multiplan & GRPC Public Participation Plan.

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Wednesday, March 13 - 4-6pm  
Bay St Louis Community Hall  
301 Blaize Ave, Bay St Louis

We need your feedback on regional transportation needs, priorities, and goals. Share your thoughts on the long-range Multiplan and the GRPC participation plan.

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**PUBLIC MEETING Tonight!**

March 12th

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**PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE TONIGHT**

Tuesday, March 12 - 4-6pm  
Jackson County Administration Building  
2915 Canty St, Pascagoula

We need your feedback on regional transportation needs, priorities, and goals. Share your thoughts on the long-range Multiplan and the GRPC participation plan.

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**Customer Fax**

**Sales Rep**

sgist@mcclatchy.com

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**Order Taker**

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**PO Number**

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**Payment Method**

Invoice

**Blind Box**

**Tear Sheets**

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**Proofs**

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1

**Net Amount**

\$34.68

**Tax Amount**

\$0.00

**Total Amount**

\$34.68

**Payment Amount**

\$0.00

**Amount Due**

\$34.68

**Ad Order Number**

0004076584

**Order Source**

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1 X 47 li

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BLX- SunHerald

**Placement**

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**Times Run**

1

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\$34.68

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02/15/2019

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

**In accordance with 23 CFR 450, Gulf Regional Planning Commission; the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO, is providing public notice of proposed updates to the Agency's Public Participation and Civil Rights Plan. The 45 day public review and comment period is set for February 15 – March 31, 2019 which also satisfies FTA Section 5307 POP notice requirements for Coast Transit Authority's public involvement program. We encourage members of the community and other interested parties to review the draft plan and provide feedback. You can download/request a copy of the draft and submit comments at [www.grpc.com](http://www.grpc.com), picked up or requested from 1635 Popps Ferry Rd-Ste. G, Biloxi MS 39532, requested by email from [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com), or in person at one of three scheduled public meetings.**

**These public meetings will provide opportunity to review and discuss the proposed update to the PPP as well as the MS Gulf Coast's 2045 Metropolitan transportation plan. Each meeting has the same information and is open house style from 4:00-6:00pm.**

**(1) March 12, Jackson Co. Administration Bldg, 2915 Canty St, Pascagoula**

**(2) March 13, Community Hall, 301 Blaize Ave, Bay St Louis**

**(3) March 14, GRPC Offices, 1635-G Popps Ferry Rd, Biloxi**

**GRPC prohibits discrimination in all of its programs, services and activities. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or other protected status. Persons who require assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the MPO at 228-864-1167 or [contactus@grpc.com](mailto:contactus@grpc.com) at least five (5) business days prior to the end of the public review period or meeting dates.**