Public Participation Plan

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Flint Hills MPO

Title VI Note

The Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) policy is to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the MPO receives federal financial assistance. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with the MPO. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Discriminatory Complaint Form, please see our website at www.FlintHillsMPO.org.

Public Participation Plan Comment Period

Federal regulations also require this Public Participation Plan (PPP) to be released for a minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days before it is adopted by the MPO Policy Board. These guidelines and requirements have all been addressed in this document.

Disclaimer

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Introduction

Public participation is an integral part of the overall transportation planning process. While federal laws and regulation set a framework for public involvement, the Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) seeks to tailor a public participation process that is effective at engaging the diverse population in the region.

The MPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP) establishes the methods used to provide a proactive public involvement by:

- Increasing public awareness and understanding;
- Offering complete information and timely public notice;
- Supporting early and continued involvement of the public and stakeholders; and
- Providing opportunities for meaningful involvement and citizen feedback.

The PPP provides a list of activities and procedures the MPO will follow to engage the public in the transportation planning process. The PPP is not a static document. As the planning process evolves to keep up with changes in technology and society, the public participation process will ebb as well. The MPO will seek new ways to effectively engage the public in the transportation planning process to ensure citizen participation in creating a safe, efficient, affordable, and integrated transportation system for all users.

What is an MPO?

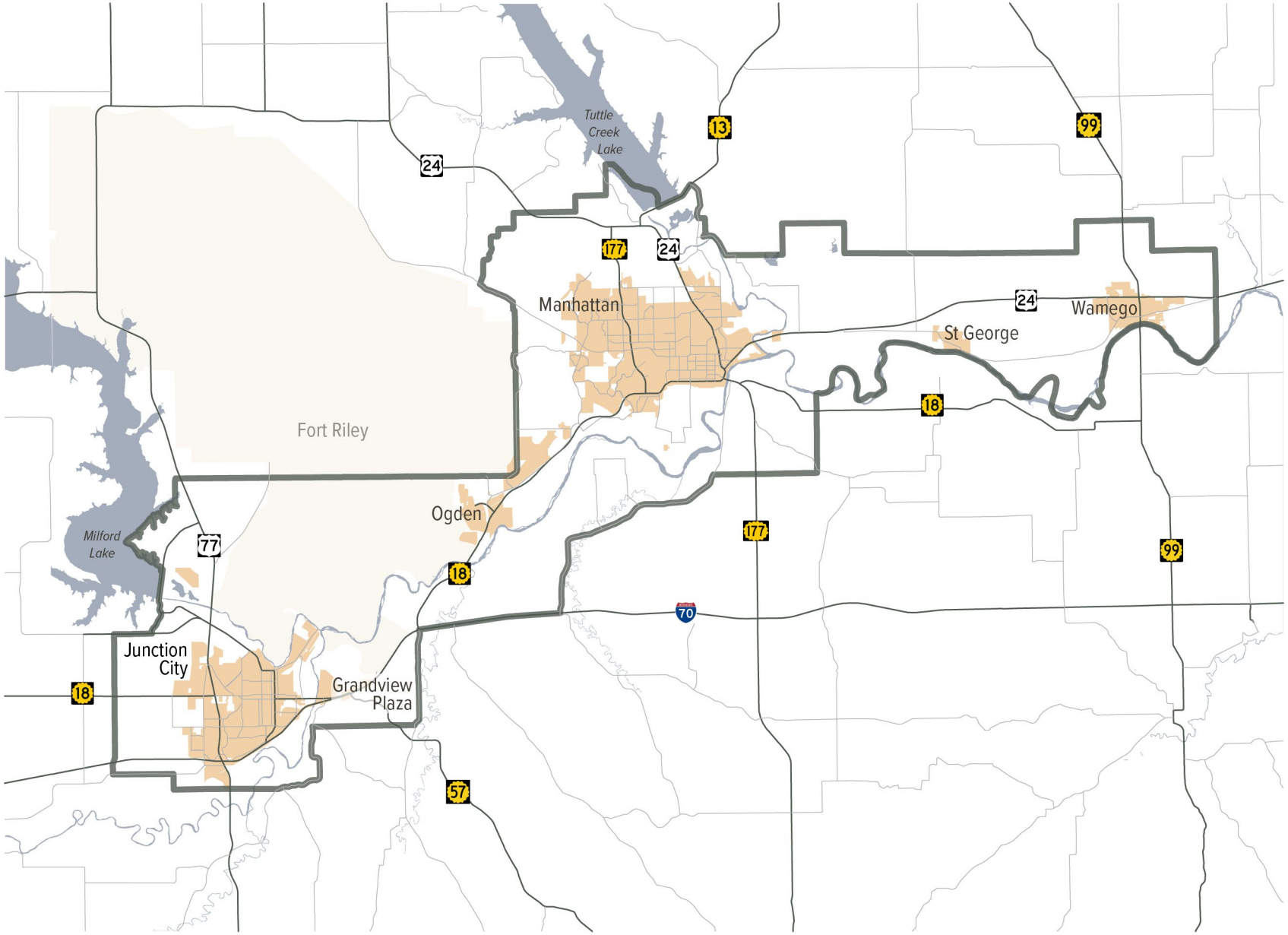
Each urbanized area with a population of 50,000 people or more is required to have an MPO which acts as a liaison between local communities, their citizens, and the state and federal departments of transportation. MPOs are important because they help direct how and where available state and federal dollars for transportation improvements will be spent. The MPO also develops four core documents that create a regional vision for how the multimodal transportation system will function and grow – now and into the future. These four documents will be further described in the MPO Core Documents section of this plan.

Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was established in February of 2013 as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the three-county area surrounding the Manhattan, Kansas Urbanized Area (**Figure 1**). The MPO planning boundary, called the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary (MPAB), consists of both rural and urban portions of the three counties. The MPO is responsible for conducting a continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated (3-C) transportation planning process for the region. The MPO is also tasked with encouraging cooperation among all levels of government to include creating a forum where transportation-planning decisions are made jointly with input from federal, state, and local agencies, private organizations, non-profits, and interested citizens.

MPO Mission: *Provide a regional forum to coordinate, encourage, and promote a safe, efficient, affordable, and integrated transportation system for all users; in support of livable communities and economic competitiveness.*

Figure 1: Map of the MPO Planning Boundary



Objectives

Public and stakeholder participation is the corner stone of any planning process. Effective public participation allows planners to identify issues and understand aspects of the transportation system directly from the various users. In its simplest form, transportation planning must include the participation of those whose everyday lives are affected by how they are able to get to work, home, school, stores, and services.

Public participation allows the public an opportunity to voice concerns and offer suggestions regarding transportation-related issues. Additionally, the process helps educate the public about the transportation planning process and affords transportation professionals and decision-makers the opportunity to see sides of an issue that may be missed when considering a project from a purely technical or political perspective. Meaningful dialog among technical professionals, local decision-makers, and general stakeholders is the key to achieving consensus, which is desired before moving a project forward. Other benefits of public participation include:

- Developing a sense of community and ownership
- Identifying issues and concerns that matter most to the community
- Fostering trust in decision-makers
- Promoting accountability
- Encouraging cooperation and compromise
- Preventing and/or mitigating future conflicts

As discussed, eliciting public participation is an essential aspect of the transportation planning process. Obtaining substantial public input and involvement on the major transportation plans and programs makes for a more comprehensive process. The MPO has established five objectives (as depicted in **Figure 2,** below) for creating and maintaining an effective public participation process.

Figure 2: Public Participation Objectives

Objective #1: Educate

The MPO is still a relatively new organization. There are still many businesses, agencies, and citizens who are unfamiliar with the MPO or the transportation planning process. MPO will strive to inform and educate the public and other agencies about the regional transportation planning process to create a forum that allows for meaningful participation and involvement by citizens and stakeholder groups.

Objective #2: Engage

The MPO will engage the public by providing ample and consistent opportunities for involvement and participation in the transportation planning process. The survey conducted as part of the PPP update specifically asked the methods most effective in engaging the public. Based on the survey results, the MPO will tailor its outreach methods to focus on the areas deemed most effective. The MPO will still use more traditional methods.

Objective #3: Encourage

The MPO will encourage all citizens, stakeholders and transportation users to provide input and participate in the planning process. Hearing from a variety of individuals with diverse transportation experiences and needs is key to the overall success of the transportation planning process.

Objective #4: Incorporate

Public input should help shape the policies and guide the planning process. The MPO will take the information and feedback received from the public for consideration and incorporation, as appropriate. The MPO will track the comments received and how they are addressed within the planning process.

Objective #5: Evaluate

The MPO will routinely evaluate the public participation process to gauge the effectiveness of the methods used to involve the public in the transportation planning process. Not only do the tools and techniques need to be monitored and continue to evolve, but the PPP document will be received and updated at least once every five years.

Plan Development

Traditional surveys were used to collect information during the initial development of the MPO's Public Participation Plan in 2014. There were 113 surveys collected during this initial process. The survey was repeated in 2018, however an online survey format was added to the process using the MPO's contacts and mailing list. The online format was preferred over the traditional survey, so much so that when the survey was completed again in 2024 for planned amendments to the PPP, it was only made available in an online format. This follows the 2024 PPP development timeline, seen below in Table 1.

Table 1: PPP Development Timeline

Start Date	End Date	Milestone/Activity
5/19/205	5/23/2025	Incorporate USDOT & KDOT updates
6/2/2025	6/6/2025	Send to KDOT, FHWA, & FTA for review
6/9/2025	6/13/2025	Incorporate KDOT, FHWA, & FTA comments
6/18/2025	8/1/2025	Draft for 45 day public comment period
7/30/2025	8/6/2025	TAC review & adoption
8/13/2025	8/20/2025	Policy Board review & adoption

Survey

In drafting the 2024 Public Participation Plan (PPP), a traditional survey was posted online, emailed to those on the distribution list, and advertised the MPO website. The main objective of the Public Participation Survey was to gain an understanding of the most effective ways to provide timely and accurate information to the public.

A total of thirty surveys were received. While this was nearly double the number of surveys received in 2018, this small number comes as no surprise to MPO staff. The City of Manhattan used the same methods to distribute a survey regarding the future of Aggieville and they received over 3,000 responses in less than a week. As discovered by the City's Aggieville survey, and confirmed with our recent PPP survey, people are less interested in completing a survey about methods for effective engagement and want to provide their input on projects or future visions that directly impact their lives. Sixty percent of PPP survey respondents stated that they are only involved when a project is of interest or affects them personally.

While the survey is by no means statistically valid, this input will still be considered when determining the best outreach methods to use. The data received from the survey will allow the MPO staff to focus on developing the methods identified as "effective" by a majority of people, rather than spending limited resources on methods the public feels are less effective. While legal ads in newspapers are federally required, only seventeen percent of people find them as an effective means of public involvement and twenty percent of the survey respondents find governmental access television as effective.

The most effective methods for conveying information to the public were identified as email, social media, and using City or County websites. While technology has been a great resource in connecting citizens with MPO activities, staff understands that not everyone has access to technology and more traditional methods will continue to be used. Additionally, the MPO has seen little activity or interaction from social media, and has since stopped using a Facebook and Twitter specifically linked to the MPO, but will be leveraging the use of popular social media accounts of strategic partnership organizations. The MPO still maintains a YouTube page with short informational videos.

A copy of the 2024 PPP Survey is in **Appendix A** and all results from the survey in **Appendix B.** Public comments received both from the surveys and during the public comment period are provided in **Appendix C**.

Public Involvement Strategies

The MPO strives to provide a public involvement process with comprehensive information, timely public notice, and full public access to the regional transportation planning process. The MPO works closely with local, state, and federal planning partners (KDOT, FHWA, FTA, Flint Hills ATA, and local jurisdictions) to coordinate public outreach efforts.

The Flint Hills MPO has a geographically dispersed population, each with their own varying demographics. This requires MPO staff to tailor the public outreach approach to each community. For example, the City of Manhattan is very active on social media with nearly 9,500 followers on X (formerly called Twitter). Junction City and Wamego do not have active X accounts. Another challenge for engaging people in the MPO planning process is the transient nature of our region's population. Between Kansas State University and Fort Riley Military Installation, a sizable portion of the region's population is constantly rotating through. This makes it difficult to keep contact lists updated. For example, as students and faculty leave K-State, their email addresses expire.

The following are various types of strategies that may be utilized by the MPO to engage the public.

Brochures and Fact Sheets

Brochures and Fact Sheets are means of providing data and information in a graphic format. This simple visual serves as a fact sheet, providing information in a quick and easy to read format. The MPO uses this tool to disseminate information about major plans, studies, and the general transportation planning process.

Newsletters

The MPO's goal is to disseminate a quarterly newsletter, highlighting various projects, announcements, or upcoming activities. This is typically in electronic format only, although a hard copy can be requested by using the contact information in Figure 3.

Website

The MPO website—www.FlintHillsMPO.org—provides a wealth of information about the MPO. Housed on the website are important documents and meeting agendas, along with announcements regarding current comment periods and public meetings. The MPO website has a "Contact Us" tab to allow interested parties to submit comments, questions, or requests to be placed on the MPO's email notification list.

Email Notifications

The MPO maintains a database of interested citizens, agency staff, and stakeholders wanting to receive email notifications. This allows the MPO to send emails regarding meeting agendas, special events or meetings, public comment periods, or other information.

During the development of the long-range transportation plan, the Flint Hills Transportation Plan (FHTP), the MPO may also utilize the email notification systems already established by local jurisdictions to inform citizens of public meetings and the FHTP draft public comment period.

Figure 3: How to Contact MPO Staff

Stay Informed!

Sign up to receive periodic emails concerning MPO initiatives. To be added, call (785) 620-3070, email FHMPO@FlintHillsMPO.org, visit www.FlintHillsMPO.org and select the "Contact Us" tab.

Postal Mailings

The MPO recognizes the diversity in the citizens it serves and that not everyone may have readily available access to the internet to view the MPO website or receive email notifications. While it would be cost prohibitive to mail every resident in the MPO region notification each time a comment period or public meeting is held, citizens may request that the MPO mail them notifications if that is their preferred method. Mailings may also be used by the MPO to target specific neighborhoods or stakeholder groups to gather comments or feedback.

Public Meetings, Workshops, and Open Houses

The MPO will hold public meetings as necessary for specific issues or documents. If a public meeting is required by federal regulations, one will be held before or during the public comment period in a location accessible by the public. Public meetings and open houses will generally be conducted for a two-hour period between the hours of 4:00pm and 7:00pm (Monday through Friday). The MPO will strive to hold a public meeting in the Manhattan, Junction City, and Wamego areas, as appropriate, to provide access that is more convenient for all citizens in the MPO region.

Workshops, open houses, or other events may also be conducted to keep the public informed, involved, and elicit feedback on various projects and plans. To notify the public of these events, the MPO will post information on the MPO website, partner organizations, and, if appropriate, through email notices, mailed notices, legal publications in the newspaper, or press releases.

The sign-in sheet shown in Figure 4 will be used at all public meetings to track who attends and how they learned about the event. Attendees will also have the opportunity to provide their email address to receive future notifications.

Figure 4: Public Meeting Sign-in Sheet

Name	Email Address	How did you hear about this event?	Race/Ethnicity (Optional)	Gender (Optional)
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer
		☐ Email ☐ Social Media ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Other:_____	☐ White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐American Indian ☐Middle Eastern ☐Pacific Islander ☐ Other	☐Male ☐Female ☐Prefer not to Answer

Local Newspaper Articles and Legal Notices

The local media will be notified when providing information to the public or encouraging participation. The MPO will publish a legal notice in the Manhattan Mercury, the Junction City Daily Union, and the Pottawatomie County Times, notifying the public of public meetings or of public comment periods for MPO documents.

Media Press Releases

Press releases are sent to local media contacts regarding public meetings, open houses and documents out for public comment. Some media contacts that have requested to be placed on the Policy Board and TAC email notification lists as well.

Surveys

Electronic and hard copy surveys may be deployed to gather community feedback regarding a specific document or process. Any survey administered by the MPO will be made available on the MPO website. Hard copies of the survey may be available at a community location, depending on the purpose of the survey. The survey will also be emailed to those signed up for Email Notifications.

An additional method of collecting surveys may be to have MPO staff at a community location collecting both electronic and hard copy responses. This has been extremely effective in the past, although it takes a large amount of staff time.

Presentations

Civic organizations, interest groups, and agencies may request presentations by MPO staff. Presentation topics may include a general overview of the MPO or specific MPO work products or planning activities.

Visualization

Visualization techniques will be used in all core transportation plans, programs and documents as much as possible. Visualization techniques promote improved understanding of the MPO process and products for those who do not have a background in transportation planning. These techniques will include the use of colors, diagrams, tables, figures, maps and photos that further illustrate the ideas and concepts in transportation plans, projects and programs.

Stakeholder Interviews

One-on-one stakeholder interviews or direct agency consultation will facilitate dialogue between the MPO staff and interested parties, including various resource agencies. This strategy is typically utilized in the Flint Hills Transportation Plan development process. MPO staff has found stakeholder interviews to be highly effective in understanding the transportation needs of typically underrepresented groups. Often, agencies working with citizens that have transportation needs are advocates on their behalf and can bring a unique perspective to the process.

Information Tables and Local Events

While legal notices in the newspaper and public meetings are federally required, the MPO has had the most success with public engagement by going to where people are going be. Whether this is a table in the K-State Union, a booth at the Everybody Counts event, or back to school night at a local school. This is one of the public involvement techniques that likely has the most potential for receiving meaningful feedback from a variety of people. The MPO will focus on having information tables at local events during the development of the Flint Hills Transportation Plan or any other regional significant document outlining future projects.

Partner Organizations

The MPO has made a point to leverage partner organizations around the community, utilizing their broad public outreach to increase that of the MPO's. For instance, the City of Manhattan has a biweekly publication called the Insider Newsletter which features current events, project updates, and other news in the area. This is disseminated via email and SMS message. The MPO may submit information regarding public meetings and large plan updates to this and other similar newsletters.

MPO Policy Board

The Policy Board is the decision-making body of the MPO and is comprised of local elected officials from the City of Manhattan, the City of Junction City, City of Wamego, the three counties (Geary, Riley and Pottawatomie), and a representative from the Kansas Department of Transportation. The Policy Board also consists of four non-voting members—Fort Riley, the Flint Hills Regional Council, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration. The Policy Board meetings are open to the public and are held in accessible locations. There is a public comment opportunity at the beginning of each meeting to allow citizens to address the Policy Board with their comments or concerns. Additionally, the Policy Board agendas are posted on the MPO's website and sent out to citizens who have asked to be included on the MPO's email notification list (see **Figure 3** for information on how to sign-up for email notifications). The City of Manhattan posts the upcoming meetings on their municipal calendar.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC is a staff-level committee that focuses on the technical aspects of transportation policy issues and decisions prior to being presented to the Policy Board. The TAC includes a knowledgeable collection of individuals who have regular interaction with the local citizens and other interested parties. The committee consists of public works staffs, planners, and zoning administrators from all cities and counties within the MPO; representatives from Kansas State University, the Flint Hills Regional Council, the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency, a regional bicycle and pedestrian representative, and the Kansas Department of Transportation. The TAC also has three non-voting members--Fort Riley, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration—who are actively involved in TAC discussions. Through this web of professionals, MPO staff remains informed about transportation concerns from a variety of stakeholders. The TAC meetings are held in accessible locations and are open to the public. There is a public comment opportunity at the beginning of each meeting to allow the public to address the TAC with their comments or concerns. Additionally, TAC agendas are available on the MPO's website and are emailed to the MPO's email notification list one week prior to the meeting.

KOMA and KORA

Both the TAC and Policy Board meetings are governed by the Kansas Open Meeting Act (KOMA) and the Kansas Open Records Act (KORA). However, there may be times when Policy Board meetings are closed to the public for executive sessions to discuss personnel and other sensitive issues. The Policy Board may on occasion meet with some members joining via conference call. In this situation, there will be a speakerphone located in the meeting location listed on the agenda.

Engaging All Populations

Title VI

The MPO's Title VI Program states the MPO complies with all civil rights laws and ensures that no person will — on the grounds of race, religion, age, gender, disability, national origin, or economic status — be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any MPO program or activity.

The MPO promotes the full and fair participation of all affected populations in the transportation decision making process. Any MPO information, educational materials, and transportation planning participation opportunities will be equally accessible to all people covered by Title VI. The Title VI Program Manual includes a complaint form and process for use by anyone who believes they have been discriminated against in the MPO operations. All Title VI complaints will be reviewed by the MPO Policy Board and used by MPO staff to improve the region's transportation planning process. The Title VI Program Manual can be accessed at: https://www.flinthillsmpo.org/public-involvement

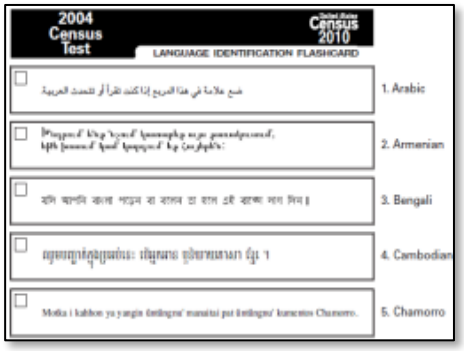
Persons with a Disability

No one should be excluded from participating in the transportation planning process. To ensure the location and setup of public meetings do not exclude people from participating, public meetings should be held in locations accessible by transit and in buildings compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Population

The MPO maintains a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan which determines the level of language assistance measures to be taken in the planning process. The percentage of population in the MPO boundary that does not understand English is small and the MPO is not required to provide written translations of MPO materials. However, the MPO will make reasonable attempts to provide translations when requested. I Speak Cards (Figure 4) will be utilized at all public meetings, available on the MPO website, and in the MPO offices. The MPO LEP Plan is available on the MPO website at: https://www.flinthillsmpo.org/public-involvement

Figure 5: I Speak Cards



The following note is included on all MPO agendas:

> **Special Accommodations:** Please notify the MPO at (785) 620-3070 or FHMPO@FlintHillsMPO.org at least 72 hours in advance if you require special accommodations to attend this meeting. We will make every effort to meet reasonable requests. The MPO does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color or national origin, according to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For more information or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, visit www.FlintHillsMPO.org.

The following note is included in all MPO documents:

> The Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) policy is to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for

which the MPO receives federal financial assistance. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with the MPO. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Discriminatory Complaint Form, please see our website at *www.FlintHillsMPO.org*.

While a federal requirement, it is also a practice of the MPO to make special effort to consider the concerns of traditionally underserved populations, including low-income, elderly, immigrant, and disabled populations. MPO meetings are open to the public and held in locations that are accessible by transit and in buildings compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The MPO staff will use a combination of the following techniques, as appropriate, to engage the traditionally underserved populations:

- Conduct interviews orally to reduce low-literacy as a barrier
- Provide a comfortable meeting space with appropriate accommodations
- Involve local officials and community representatives, as appropriate
- Use traditional, non-computer-based means during public outreach efforts
- Hold meetings in "neutral" locations like schools, community centers, or public libraries (when necessary)
- To the extent possible, host meetings in locations that are accessible by transit and held during transit operating hours
- Utilize the knowledge and connections of existing organizations
- Attend scheduled and special events (the "don't wait for them to come to you, go to them" approach)
- Provide documents in alternative formats upon request
- Use interpreters and translated materials where appropriate and feasible (this is further defined in the MPO's Limited English Proficiency Plan)

Evaluating Public Participation Strategies

One of the five objectives of the MPO's Public Participation Plan is to "evaluate" the process and methods used to involve the public in the planning process. The PPP is a constantly evolving document and must be continuously evaluated and improved upon to create and maintain effective public engagement.

A complete update of the PPP is initiated every five years to reevaluate the methods and strategies for engaging the public. In the interim, the public participation process will be reviewed on an annual basis to assess whether public opinions are being actively sought and that the public has equal and full access to all MPO documents and plans. Public participation methods will be reviewed using the evaluation criteria in Table 2 to gauge the effectiveness of each strategy.

An effective evaluation component will outline the steps to be taken to evaluate those tools and techniques and identify measures to quantify success rates and outline strategies to improve the MPO's public participation process. It is recommended that the tools and techniques be tracked annually while the entire Public Participation Plan be reviewed and updated at least once every five years (prior to the start of public participation activities for the FHTP update) to ensure that appropriate changes are being implemented by the MPO. Table 2 outlines the performance measures that are used to track how the MPO uses the tools or techniques.

Table 1: Evaluation of Public Participation Plan Methods

		FHTP		TIP		UPWP		PPP	
Tactic	**Performance Measure**	Full Update	Amendment	Full Update	Amendment/ Admin Revision	Full Update	Amendment/ Admin Revision	Full Update	Other Projects/General
Informational Tables	Number of events	3							32
Public Meetings/ Open Houses	Total number of attendees at all events	41							500
	Number of comments received during events	5							1
E-Subscription	Number of persons contacted (emails sent)	178		178	178	178	178	178	178
Website	Average number of visits per day	9							
	Total visits to-date (2020-2024)	14,005							
Stakeholder Meetings	Number of stakeholders interviewed	5							15
Presentations	Number of presentations made	13							55
Surveys	Number of survey respondents	23						30	1500
Public Comment Period	Number of comments received	1		138	0	0	0	0	

MPO Core Documents

The MPO's core documents are the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Public Participation Plan (PPP). Each document is described in the following pages. All core documents are available on the MPO web page (www.FlintHillsMPO.org) and available in print upon request.

Flint Hills Transportation Plan (FHTP)

www.flinthillsmpo.org/fhtp

The Flint Hills Transportation Plan (FHTP), referred to in federal legislation as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, is the region's long-range plan that establishes a vision for a safe and efficient transportation system to adequately serve the MPO region over the next 25 years. The FHTP identifies the current transportation system conditions and future recommendations for all modes of surface transportation (automobiles, trucks, public transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians).

The FHTP document is updated in its entirety at least once every five years. This includes reevaluating the vision for the transportation system, updating the needs analysis, along with the identified projects. Amendments to the FHTP are made as needed to reflect significant changes to regional transportation policies and/or funding conditions.

After the public comment period, the draft will be taken to the TAC (along with any public comments received) for their recommended approval for the Policy Board to adopt the plan. Once the Policy Board approves the FHTP, the approved document then replaces the former FHTP. The final FHTP is sent to KDOT, FHWA and FTA for informational purposes (as these entities do not approve the FHTP). See Table 3 for the complete public participation development process.

NOTE: If the final FHTP document differs significantly from the draft made available for public comment, an additional opportunity for public comment will be provided.

At least two open houses/public meetings will be held during the development of the FHTP. There will be a steering committee to guide the process, as well as stakeholder interviews to gather feedback. The public will have opportunities to provide input during development through surveys made available both hard copy and online.

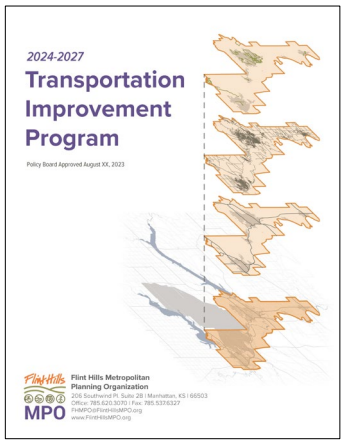
Performance Measures

Federal transportation legislation requires performance-based planning with specific performance measures. The MPO's performance measures were identified in the Flint Hills Transportation Plan adopted in late 2020, and have been updated annually via amendments to the document and through measure-specific data reports. The federal performance measures have strict requirements regarding target setting timelines and reporting metrics. These requirements are being implemented in phases based on final rule effective dates. Targets have been established for the Safety, Transit Assessment Management, Pavement and Bridge Condition, and System and Freight Reliability metrics. The other federally required metrics do not have targets listed as of yet. However, when targets are due, they will be amended into the FHTP.

The targets established by the MPO are posted on the MPO webpage at: https://www.flinthillsmpo.org/performance-measures

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

www.flinthillsmpo.org/tip



The TIP is a short-range plan that includes all regionally significant and/or federally funded multimodal projects to be implemented over the next four years. The TIP is developed in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), the cities and counties, and local transit and paratransit operators. The TIP is one of the major implementation tools for the FHTP, so projects in the TIP must be consistent with the FHTP.

Projects included in the TIP are typically drawn from local city or county Capital Improvement Programs (CIP), from KDOT funding programs, and from projects listed as recommended system improvements in the FHTP. The local CIP processes have their own public involvement procedures involving publication of public notices initiating the process, and public hearings by the Commission.

The TIP is required to be updated every 4 years; however, the MPO typically updates it every 2 years. The MPO-approved TIP is sent to KDOT, FHWA, and FTA for further approval and then inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). See Table 3 for the complete public participation development process.

NOTE: If the final TIP document differs significantly from the draft made available for public comment, an additional opportunity for public comment will be provided.

Public meetings/open houses will be conducted during the development of a new TIP.

TIP Amendments

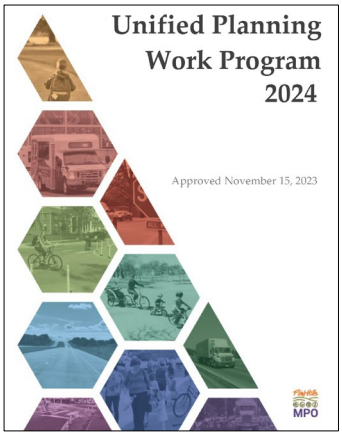
Projects are added, removed, or altered through the regularly scheduled amendment process. Actions for eligible TIP amendments are described in the TIP.

TIP Administrative Revision

Administrative revisions to the TIP may be made if they meet specific criteria listed in the TIP. No public participation requirements apply to TIP administrative revisions. Once the administrative revision is processed it should be posted online and shared with the TAC and MPO at their next regularly scheduled meeting and incorporated into the next amendment.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

www.flinthillsmpo.org/upwp



The UPWP identifies and budgets for the regional transportation planning projects that the MPO and its planning partners will undertake during each calendar year. The UPWP outlines the status of planning activities, provides information about accomplishments from the previous year, and provides an overview of major activities planned for the upcoming year. The UPWP is developed in cooperation with KDOT, FHWA, FTA, and the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency.

Each May the MPO staff begins drafting the upcoming year's UPWP in coordination with the planning partners listed above. The UPWP is typically approved by the MPO in October or November, before being sent to KDOT and FHWA/FTA for approval.

UPWP Amendments

Major changes to the UPWP are made through formal amendments. Amendments are used when projects/work tasks are either added or deleted, or when significant changes are made to the UPWP text and/or budget. UPWP amendments also require KDOT and FHWA/FTA approval. The MPO will typically do an amendment to the UPWP after the second quarter to adjust the budget based on the previous year's expenditures and what has been spent to date. This amendment will likely be approved by the TAC and Policy Board in September or October of each year.

UPWP Administrative Revision

Minor corrections or changes and routine data updates can be made to the UPWP by the TAC and then sent to the MPO Policy Board for concurrence at their next meeting. Revisions will be used for routine technical changes and updates to the UPWP text, graphics, and minor budget changes of 10% or less (for the UPWP budget total, the total for any one funding source, or the cost of any one staff work task). Changes to the non-staff budget items (e.g., equipment and supplies budget) may be changed by more than 10% through an administrative revision as long as they do not change the UPWP budget total cost by 10% or more. UPWP changes customarily made by administrative revision include corrections of spelling or grammar errors, updates of hourly rates for MPO staff to reflect salary increases, document formatting revisions, and graphic improvements in the document.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

www.flinthillsmpo.org/ppp

The Public Participation Plan outlines how the MPO works to achieve essential public participation in all planning activities. It also recommends methods to engage the public during the regional transportation planning decision making process. Furthermore, it states how members of the public can be involved in the transportation planning process. See Table 3 for the development and review public participation process for the PPP.

Amendments

Amendments consist of small changes including clarifying or making minor changes to processes or strategies and incorporating federal requirements.

MPO Document Development, Strategies, and Review Process

Table 2: MPO Document Development Outreach Strategies

	Long-Range Plan		PM Targets			TIP			UPWP			PPP	
= Item must be completed	Full Update	Amendment	Setting	Amending	Annual Report	Full Update	Amendment	Administrative Modification	Full Update	Amendment	Administrative Modification	Full Update	Amendment
How Often	5 yrs	As needed	As needed	As needed	Annually	2 yrs	Quarterly, if needed	As Needed	Annually	As needed	As needed	5 yrs	As Needed
Development Process													
Discuss the plan with TAC and/or MPO Policy Board during development													
Public Engagement Strategies:													
-Survey	As Needed	As Needed										As needed	
-Open House/Public Meeting		As Needed										As Needed	
-Stakeholder Meetings		As Needed										As Needed	
-Booth at Community Event	As Needed	As Needed											
Review Process													
KDOT and FHWA/FTA reviews the draft													
MPO Committee/MPO Policy Board review prior to release for public comment													
Paid newspaper notice announcing public comment period	30 days	30 days											
Email notification of public comment period													
Place draft for review on MPO website													
Draft Available at MPO Office													
Draft Available at Manhattan City Hall													
Draft Available at MHK Public Library													
Draft Available at Geary County Office Building													
Draft Available at Junction City Public Library													
Draft Available at Wamego City Hall													
Draft Available at Wamego Public Library													
Public comment period --> MPO website posting and email notice about comment period	30 days	30 days				30 days	15 days		15 days	15 days		45 days	15 days
Compile all public comments received													
Provide a summary of how comments were considered and addressed													
TAC reviews draft making a recommendation to MPO Policy Board													
MPO Policy Board considers the final draft for approval													
The approved document is sent to KDOT, FHWA, FTA, and posted online													

Draft Document Availability

When major MPO documents or products are developed, updated or amended, copies of the draft document will be available during the public comment period at the locations listed in **Figure 7**. The table also indicates the responsible department or staff person (if applicable) for ensuring all documents are available to the public. A copy of the draft may also be obtained by visiting the MPO website at www.FlintHillsMPO.org, or emailing staff at FHMPO@FlintHillsMPO.org.

Figure 6: Draft Document Availability Locations

FHMPO Office 2805 Claflin Rd Suite 100 Manhattan, KS 66502	**Geary County Offices** Planning and Zoning Department 200 E. 8th Street Junction City, KS 66441	**Wamego City Hall** 430 Lincoln Ave Wamego, KS 66547
Manhattan Public Library* 629 Poyntz Ave Manhattan. KS 66502	**Dorothy Bramlage Public Library*** 230 West Seventh Street Junction City, KS 66441	**Wamego City Public Library*** 431 Lincoln Ave Wamego, KS 66547

*Only the Flint Hills Transportation Plan and Public Participation Plan drafts will be available at these locations.

Appendix A: PPP Survey

Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization
206 Southwind Place, Suite 2B | Manhattan, KS | 66503
785.620.3070 | FHMPO@FlintHillsMPO.org
www.FlintHillsMPO.org

Please complete the following Public Participation Plan Survey so the MPO can more effectively involve the public in our process and better serve your transportation needs. Thank you in advance for your time.

1. Are you familiar with the Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. Which MPO activities have you heard of or participated in? (select all that aplpy)

- ☐ Past public participation plans
- ☐ Long-range transportation plan (Connect 2040)
- ☐ Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- ☐ Bicycle or Pedestrian Planning (Safe Routes to School, Bike-Ped Systems Plan, etc.)
- ☐ Transit Planning
- ☐ Electric Vehicle Readiness Planning
- ☐ Complete Streets Planning
- ☐ None of the above

3. How would you rate your current level of involvement with the transportation planning process?

- ☐ I am highly involved as required by my profession
- ☐ I am highly involved as an interested citizen
- ☐ I am involved only when the project or issue affects me professionally
- ☐ I am involved only when the project or issue affects me personally
- ☐ I am involved only when the project or issue is of interest to me
- ☐ I am never involved

(Continue on next page)

4. What prevents you from becoming involved in transportation issues? (select all that apply)

- [ ] I do not know how to get involved
- [ ] I think decisions are made behind closed doors
- [ ] I do not think my input will matter
- [ ] The meeting locations or times are not convenient for me
- [ ] I do not have enough free time to participate in the planning process
- [ ] I do not understand the issues or do not have enough information

5. How effective are each of the following methods for you to receive information?

	Effective	Not Effective	Unsure
E-mail	○	○	○
Newspaper Advertisements	○	○	○
Newspaper Articles	○	○	○
Mailings	○	○	○
Government Access TV	○	○	○
Radio	○	○	○
Neighborhood Newsletters - Listserv	○	○	○
City or County Websites	○	○	○
Project Specific Websites	○	○	○
Surveys	○	○	○
Social Media	○	○	○
Public Meetings	○	○	○
Brochures - Fact Sheets	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○

(Continue on next page)

6. How effective are each of the following methods for you to submit comments and questions?

	Effective	Not effective	Unsure
Speak directly to a City/County/MPO employee (phone or in person)	○	○	○
MPO surveys	○	○	○
Comment feature on the MPO website	○	○	○
Paper survey distributed at an event	○	○	○
Public meetings held in public buildings	○	○	○
Workshops or open houses	○	○	○
Booths at community events	○	○	○
Social media	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○

7. How should the MPO share comments it receives from the public? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Public comments should be posted on the MPO website
- ☐ Public comments should be discussed at working sessions and committee meetings
- ☐ Public comments should be made available at public meetings
- ☐ Public comments should be included in final project documents in a public comment section
- ☐ Other

(Continue on next page)

8. Please indicate your place of residence

- [ ] City of Manhattan
- [ ] City of Junction City
- [ ] City of Wamego
- [ ] City of Ogden
- [ ] City of Grandview Plaza
- [ ] City of St. George
- [ ] Fort Riley Military Installation
- [ ] Blue Township, Pottawatomie County (including Green Valley Rd area)
- [ ] Rural portion of Riley County
- [ ] Rural portion of Geary County
- [ ] Rural portion of Pottawatomie County
- [ ] Other

9. What is your ZIP code?

10. If you would like to provide MPO staff with additional comments, please add them below.

Appendix B: PPP Survey Results

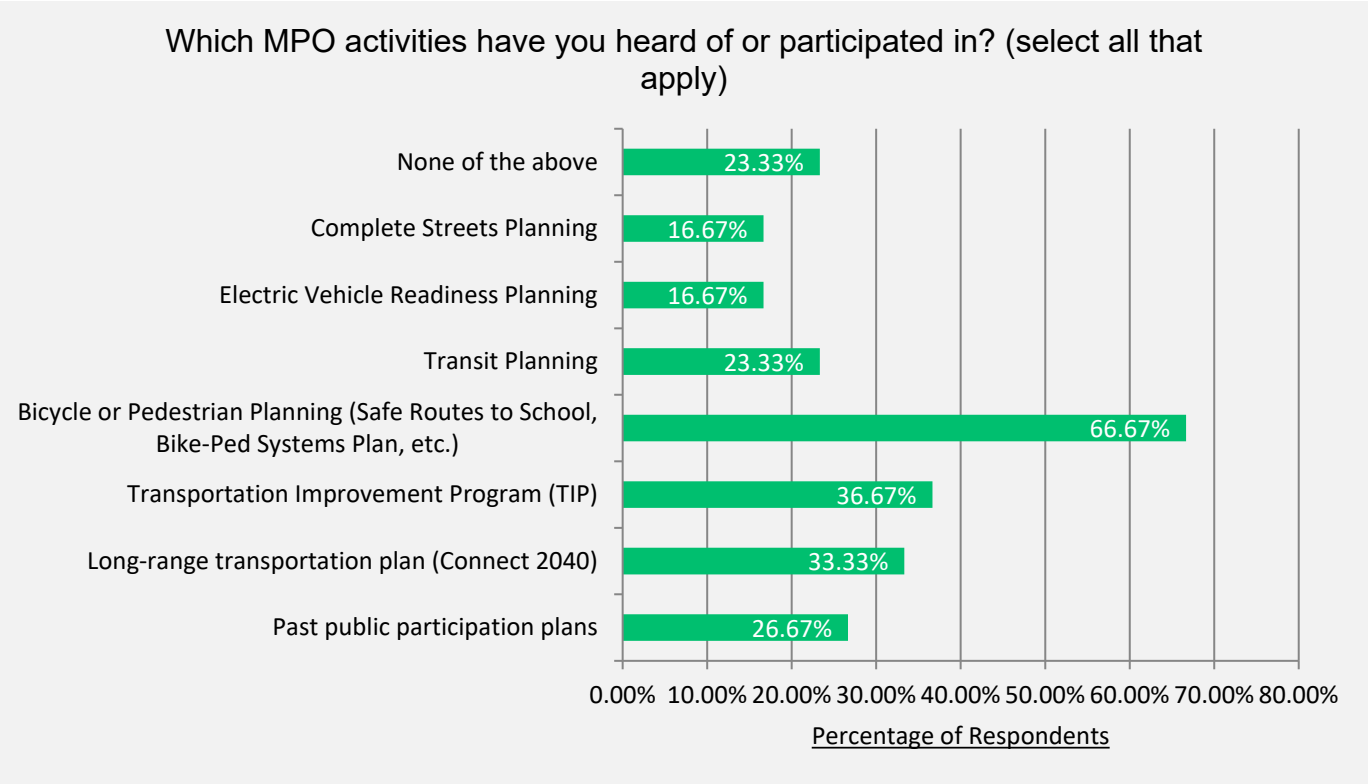
The following is a summary of the responses received during the Public Participation Survey. In total, there were 30 electronic surveys returned.

1. Are you familiar with the Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?

◯ Yes **20 responses, 66.67%**

◯ No **10 responses, 33.33%**

2. Which MPO activities have you heard of or participated in? (select all that aplpy)



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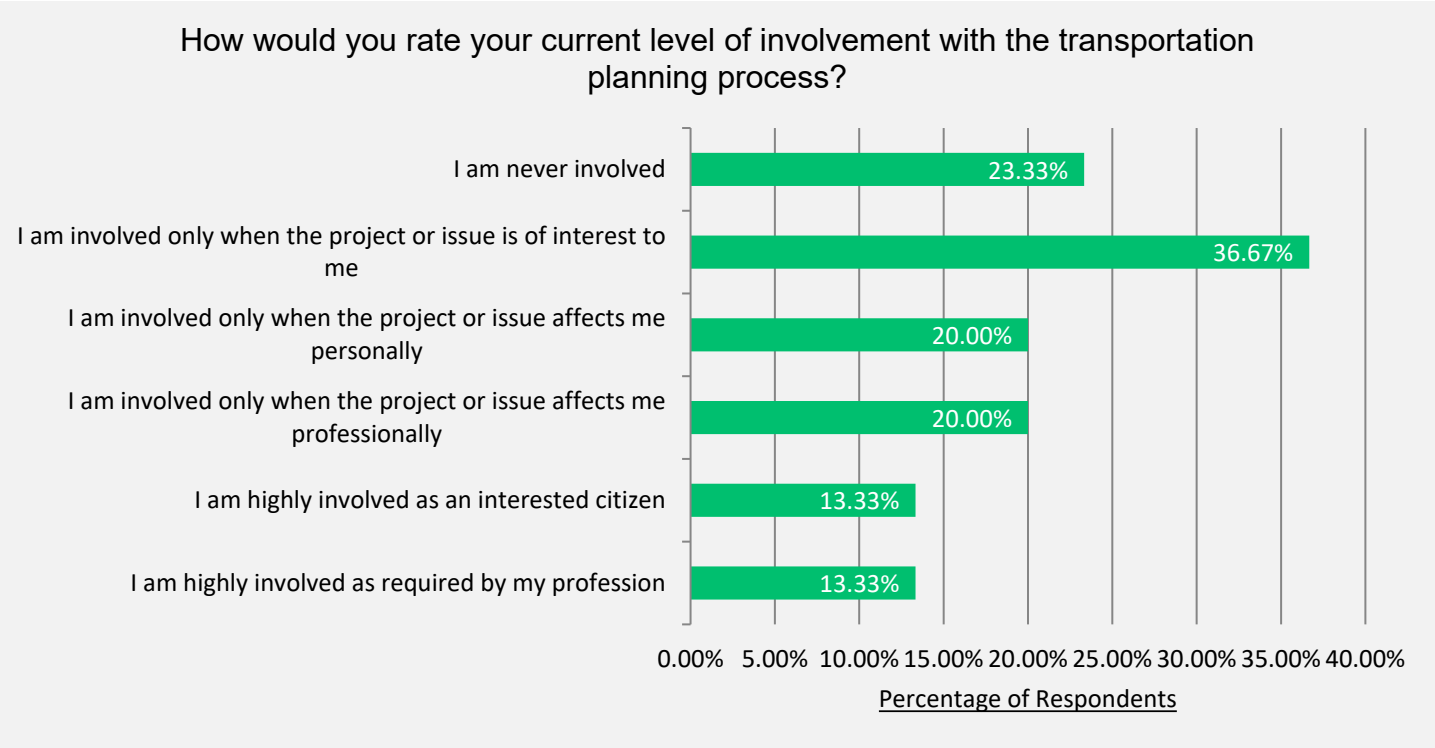
3. How would you rate your current level of involvement with the transportation planning process?



4. What prevents you from becoming involved in transportation issues? (select all that apply)

25 responses, 5 skipped

- ☐ I do not know how to get involved **9 responses, 36%**
- ☐ I think decisions are made behind closed doors **6 responses, 24%**
- ☐ I do not think my input will matter **3 responses, 12%**
- ☐ The meeting locations or times are not convenient for me **5 responses, 20%**
- ☐ I do not have enough free time to participate in the planning process **8 responses, 32%**
- ☐ I do not understand the issues or do not have enough information **6 responses, 24%**

5. How effective are each of the following methods for you to receive information?

	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	UNSURE	TOTAL
E-mail	96.55% 28	3.45% 1	0.00% 0	29
Newspaper Advertisements	3.45% 1	89.66% 26	6.90% 2	29
Newspaper Articles	17.24% 5	72.41% 21	10.34% 3	29
Mailings	51.72% 15	27.59% 8	20.69% 6	29
Government Access TV	20.00% 6	66.67% 20	13.33% 4	30
Radio	51.72% 15	31.03% 9	17.24% 5	29
Neighborhood Newsletters - Listserv	33.33% 10	46.67% 14	20.00% 6	30
City or County Websites	72.41% 21	17.24% 5	10.34% 3	29
Project Specific Websites	53.57% 15	32.14% 9	14.29% 4	28
Surveys	70.00% 21	20.00% 6	10.00% 3	30
Social Media	75.86% 22	20.69% 6	3.45% 1	29
Public Meetings	53.57% 15	17.86% 5	28.57% 8	28
Brochures - Fact Sheets	60.00% 18	13.33% 4	26.67% 8	30
Other	7.14% 1	0.00% 0	92.86% 13	14

(Continue on next page)

6. How effective are each of the following methods for you to submit comments and questions?

	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	UNSURE	TOTAL
Speak directly to a City/County/MPO employee (phone or in person)	65.52% 19	10.34% 3	24.14% 7	29
MPO surveys	63.33% 19	3.33% 1	33.33% 10	30
Comment feature on the MPO website	56.67% 17	16.67% 5	26.67% 8	30
Paper survey distributed at an event	31.03% 9	37.93% 11	31.03% 9	29
Public meetings held in public buildings	58.62% 17	6.90% 2	34.48% 10	29
Workshops or open houses	72.41% 21	10.34% 3	17.24% 5	29
Booths at community events	55.17% 16	24.14% 7	20.69% 6	29
Social media	75.86% 22	10.34% 3	13.79% 4	29
Other	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 13	13

7. How should the MPO share comments it receives from the public? (select all that apply)

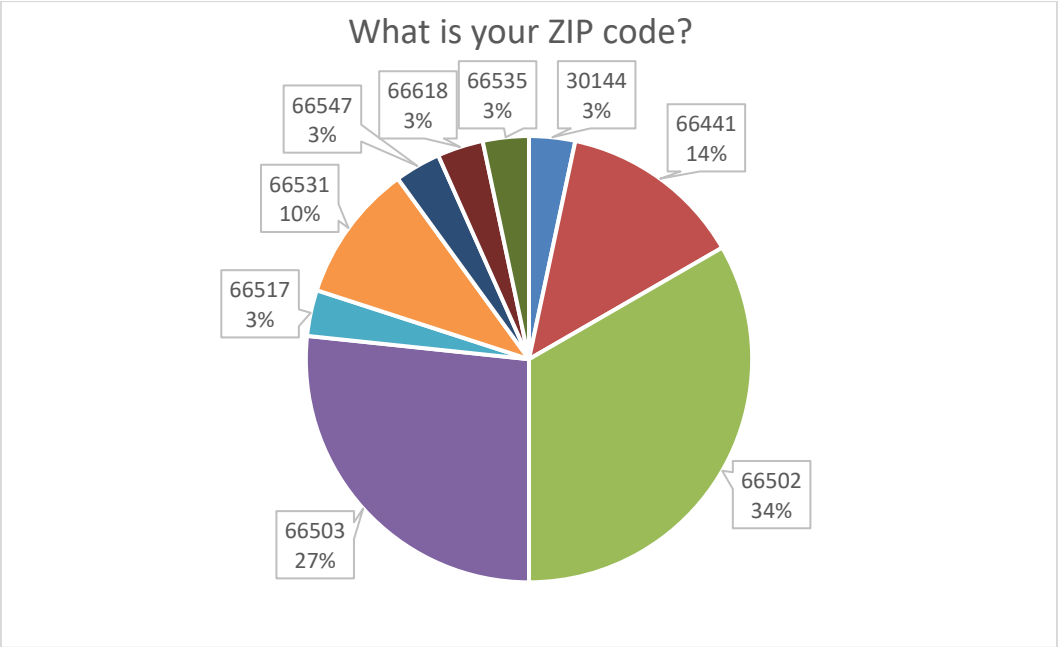
- ☐ Public comments should be posted on the MPO website **21 responses, 70%**
- ☐ Public comments should be discussed at working sessions and committee meetings **23 responses, 76.67%**
- ☐ Public comments should be made available at public meetings **18 responses, 60%**
- ☐ Public comments should be included in final project documents in a public comment section **22 responses, 73.33%**
- ☐ Other **1 response, 3.33%**

(Continue on next page)

8. Please indicate your place of residence

- [ ] City of Manhattan **17 responses, 56.67%**
- [ ] City of Junction City **3 responses, 10%**
- [ ] City of Wamego
- [ ] City of Ogden **1 response, 3.33%**
- [ ] City of Grandview Plaza
- [ ] City of St. George
- [ ] Fort Riley Military Installation
- [ ] Blue Township, Pottawatomie County (including Green Valley Rd area)
- [ ] Rural portion of Riley County **4 responses, 13.33%**
- [ ] Rural portion of Geary County
- [ ] Rural portion of Pottawatomie County **3 responses, 10%**
- [ ] Other **3 responses, 10%**

9. What is your ZIP code?



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10. If you would like to provide MPO staff with additional comments, please add them below.

"Why not have information posted at the ATA bus stops?"

"Keep up the great work!"

"I don't know how to get involved and don't know if meetings are open for me to attend"

"Thank you for your work!"

"Overall I think Manhattan does a pretty good job of making constant improvements. Change is slow and many opinions to navigate. Public transportation is in dire need of a massive upgrade. ATA bus is trying but they need help guys. I personally am strongly in favor of pedestrian only zones (downtown and Aggieville are prime locations) and encouraging bike transit throughout the city. It is very intimidating to ride your bike down a street without a separate bike lane, especially when vehicles are driving over 30 mpg. Aggieville bike lanes are very cool. Thanks for all you do! Onward and upward."

"It seems that only a select few (those actively working on transportation related issues) are even aware of the efforts to improve our public transportation. A PR campaign tailored to our current social media driven world seems to be in order. Thank you for your efforts in this regard!"

"It would be beneficial if all entities within the MPO would work together. Much more can be accomplished working together as a team. I would love to see the MPO and other entities try to determine why we have a 'brain drain' due to graduates not wanting to stay in the community. The same goes for Retire to the Flint Hills for active retirees. Why aren't they retiring here?"

"I think you do good work, and glad you asked. Public involvement is hard. Repetitive bite size presences where scheduling isn't needed is good. Consider Youtube Videos."

Appendix C: Public Comments

Comments from the Survey

"Why not have information posted at the ATA bus stops?"

"Keep up the great work!"

"I don't know how to get involved and don't know if meetings are open for me to attend"

"Thank you for your work!"

"Overall I think Manhattan does a pretty good job of making constant improvements. Change is slow and many opinions to navigate. Public transportation is in dire need of a massive upgrade. ATA bus is trying but they need help guys. I personally am strongly in favor of pedestrian only zones (downtown and Aggieville are prime locations) and encouraging bike transit throughout the city. It is very intimidating to ride your bike down a street without a separate bike lane, especially when vehicles are driving over 30 mpg. Aggieville bike lanes are very cool. Thanks for all you do! Onward and upward."

"It seems that only a select few (those actively working on transportation related issues) are even aware of the efforts to improve our public transportation. A PR campaign tailored to our current social media driven world seems to be in order. Thank you for your efforts in this regard!"

"It would be beneficial if all entities within the MPO would work together. Much more can be accomplished working together as a team. I would love to see the MPO and other entities try to determine why we have a 'brain drain' due to graduates not wanting to stay in the community. The same goes for Retire to the Flint Hills for active retirees. Why aren't they retiring here?"

"I think you do good work, and glad you asked. Public involvement is hard. Repetitive bite size presences where scheduling isn't needed is good. Consider Youtube Videos."

Comments received during the Public Comment Period

No comments were received.