

Chapter 4: Measuring Participation Opportunities

Public input is a critical component of the success of the MPO's initiatives, and the agency consistently evaluates its participation opportunities for convenience and accessibility to the public. A participation opportunity is a situation where a citizen can provide public input, either directly to staff or in a format such as a written or emailed comment that staff receives and responds to. Citizens can participate at a regularly scheduled forum or community meeting, project workshops, events at which the MPO attends, online, or over the phone.

Participation at MPO Public Forums, Workshops and Community Meetings

As in years past, actively pursuing public outreach to obtain citizens' feedback is a major priority for the MPO. The MPO is committed to providing multiple avenues for citizens to interact with the agency, in person, in ways that are convenient and sensitive to their available time.

The main paths to participation include attending a regularly scheduled MPO or committee meeting, applying to become a member of a MPO committee, attending a public workshop on a specific topic sponsored by the MPO, and interacting with the MPO at fairs and exhibitions.

All MPO board and advisory committee meetings from 2018 to 2019 were publicly noticed, open to the public, and provided opportunity for public comment. Public hearings were held during public meetings of the MPO Board and counted as one meeting during this cycle **Table 11** contains summary information of the committee meetings held in 2018 and 2019.

Table 11: MPO committee meetings held during 2018 and 2019

Board/Committee	2018			2019		
	Meetings	Attendees	Public Speakers	Meetings	Attendees	Public Speakers
MPO Board	11	487	78	12	634	117
Citizens Advisory Committee	11	311	3	13	342	23
Technical Advisory Committee	10	202	1	11	188	3
Policy Committee	8	78	1	6	65	1
Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee	12	308	7	12	296	4
Livable Roadways Committee	11	289	1	11	279	5
Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board	6	140	0	6	120	2
Intelligent Transportation Committee	4	69	0	4	67	1
Independent Oversight Committee	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	82	8
Joint TAC/CAC Meeting	1	38	0	1	37	0
Total	74	1,922	91	80	2,110	164

Public Outreach Events at which displays, presentations, discussions and feedback occurred

Beyond regularly scheduled meetings, the MPO hosted or participated in 243 external public meetings or events in 2018 and 2019. This represents an increase of 8% from the previous period. The MPO also began tracking the number of event participants that staff members interacted with in 2017. In 2018 and 2019, the events with the highest number of attendees included:

Highest-Attended Events in 2018

1. Labor Day Weekend Florida's Largest Home Show [September 2-5] (40,000 attendees)
2. Raymond James Stadium Back to School Bash [August 6] (10,000 attendees)
3. Franklin St/Riverwalk/Ashley Walk of Silence [October 22] (5,000 attendees)
4. FL State Fairgrounds Hills School District Choice EXPO [November 4] (3,000 attendees)
5. Bay to Bay Vision Zero Sign Waving [October 11] (1,000 attendees)

Highest-Attended Events in 2019

1. WFLA AM Tampa Bay Morning Radio Show [October 4] (100,000 listeners)
2. Kids Day 2019 – LRTP Phase 2 Outreach [July 21] (15,000 attendees)
3. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade [January 20] (20,000 attendees)
4. YES! FAIR (Family Abilities Information Rallies) [October 5] (1,200 attendees)
5. Gasparilla Children's Bike Rodeo [January 19] (1,000 attendees)

The complete list of events that MPO sponsored or participated in are located in [Appendices 2](#) (2018) and [3](#) (2019).

Attendance at events in Environmental Justice (EJ) areas

Of the 243 meetings that the MPO hosted or participated in, at least 45 were held in EJ areas. EJ areas in Hillsborough County are census tracts one standard deviation above the county's median in concentration of one or more of the following characteristics: low-income, race, and ethnicity (Hispanic and Latino).

MPO Board and Committee Meeting Participation Number and origin of participants

A total of 4,032 participants attended MPO Board and committee meetings in the 2018-2019. This is approximately a 20% decrease from the previous cycle.

There was a recommendation from the previous MOE to track the origin of public participants at MPO Board and committee meetings. **Tables 12** and **13** provides zip code data for attendees of MPO Board meetings for 2018 - 2019. Data for 2020-2021 will include both the board and committees since the figures for the committees were unavailable for this cycle. The request for this information will be added to the committee sign in sheets.

Table 12: Zip codes of attendees for 2018 MPO Board meetings

2018 MPO Board Meetings (Zip Code Data)

Zip Code	# of Attendees
32312, 33547, 33578, 33596, 33606, 33607, 33615, 33617, 33625, 33647, 33702, 33716, 33760, 34242, 34642	1
33011, 33511, 33603, 33604, 33626, 33675	2
33611	3
33605	4
33612	9
33602	10
33637	11
<i>Note: Not all attendees provided zip codes</i>	

Table 13: Zip codes of attendees for 2019 MPO Board meetings

2019 MPO Board Meetings (Zip Code Data)

Zip Code	# of Attendees
32827, 33414, 33487, 33509, 33558, 33569, 33572, 33584, 33592, 33616, 33620, 33634, 33656, 33703, 34691, 34761,	1
33309, 33547, 33601, 33615, 33618, 33701, 33715, 33830, 34639, 34743	2
33596, 33619	3
33611, 33613, 33624, 33626, 33629	4
33594, 33606, 33610, 33614, 33617	5
33637, 33647	7
33612	8
33609	11
33605, 33607	22
33602	34
33603	35
33604	42
<i>Note: Not all attendees provided zip codes</i>	

Public Turnout for the Transportation Improvement Program Annual Hearings (2018-2019)



The 2018 TIP public hearing attracted 125 attendees and 39 speakers, donors or commenters². Attendance from the public was complemented by five posts on the 2018 MPO TIP Public Hearing Facebook event and 47 emails. The GoToMeeting virtual event also attracted one comment on its live stream chat over the course of the event.

The 2019 TIP hearing attracted 167 attendees and 68 speakers, donors or commenters. There were 40 comments left on the 2019 MPO TIP Public Hearing Facebook event, 3 phone calls, and 117 emails.

Public Turnout for the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Public Hearing

Between October 7, 2019, and November 5, 2019, the MPO published a draft of the 2045 update for its 2045 LRTP - *It's Time Hillsborough* for public review and comment. The draft LRTP allocated \$32.2 billion in available funding through 2045 for MPO investment priority programs, including cost feasible projects in the first five years (2020-2025) and state and local cost feasible and candidate projects through 2045. The comment period culminated on November 5, 2019, following a 30-day review of the draft plan. Public involvement was encouraged through a series of engagement opportunities, including:

- Online surveys (planhillsborough.org/2045lrtp);
- Hard copy surveys;
- Community presentations through June and July; and
- A public hearing meeting (November 5, 2019).

The draft plan was available online at the MPO's website, and print copies were available at the Planning Commission Library on the 18th floor of the Hillsborough County Center for review. Opportunities to submit comments via email, voicemail, and Facebook were available until November 4, 2019. Public meetings, including the November 5th public hearing, were broadcast live on HTV. The MPO Board voted and adopted the plan at the public hearing on November 5, 2019. Through the 30-day public comment period, the Hillsborough MPO received 25 comments.

Number of persons on the MPO mailing list receiving regular agendas

The number of individuals on the MPO mailing list who received regular agendas increased during the 2018-2019 cycle, largely due to creation of the Independent Oversight Committee. In December 2019, the last month of the cycle in which all committee meetings were held, approximately 1,227 individuals received an agenda mailed through Constant Contact.

Surveys, Draft Documents and Plans Available for Public Comment

From 2018-2019 the MPO hosted five surveys seeking comments from the public and its committees. These surveys included:

- **Citizens Advisory Committee Members Effectiveness and Time Management survey** - On several occasions in 2018, committee meetings went beyond the scheduled

² Donors provided their time to allow a speaker to speak for longer. Commenters made written comments.

agenda time. Most members are comfortable with monthly meetings being 2 – 2½ hours long. There was consensus to have an option for informal discussion in addition to the regular monthly meetings and have CAC reports presented in person at MPO Board meetings by the CAC Chair or a designated member. (13 respondents).



Annual CTC Evaluation surveys - to assess the reliability, service effectiveness, service efficiency, service availability, safety, and user input of Hillsborough County's Community Transportation Coordinator (564 respondents in 2018 and 932 respondents in 2019).

- **MetroQuest: It's TIME Tampa Bay survey** - Over the summer of 2018, the metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) of Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco County asked citizens of the three counties to identify priorities for land use and transportation and consider three very different scenarios for future growth. (10,000 responses).
- **MetroQuest: It's TIME Hillsborough survey** – available electronically and hardcopy (Spanish and English). The It's TIME Hillsborough 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan update involved a collaborative effort, between the Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Hillsborough Planning Commission to implement a two-phase public engagement process. (5,219 responses)
- **2018 Gulf Coast Safe Streets Summit Evaluation survey** – Positive feedback for a future summit, information presented, and the value was received (35 responses)
- **Citizen evaluation survey**, to solicit feedback from the public on the service of MPO staff who assisted with questions or comments (18 responses)

The MPO publishes all its reports online at PlanHillsborough.org. Prior to MPO Board adoption, these reports and documents are kept in draft status; once adopted, a date of adoption is added. At any time, visitors to a project page are encouraged to contact the project manager through an email link or send general questions to planner@plancom.org, which is then distributed to the appropriate staff member for response. Several project pages also contain links to surveys, off-site information pages, and public comment forms. The presence of these additional resources is determined by the needs of the project.

Increasing Public Participation Efforts with Minorities, Low-Income Individuals, and the Transportation Disadvantaged

Ensuring the MOE report reflects representative public involvement

The Public Participation Plan 2018 Update will be provided to a member of the public to review for readability.

Developing maps with updated, community-specific demographic, and socioeconomic data within the MPO's geographic boundaries

In conjunction with the Center for Urban Transportation Research at USF, MPO staff participated in the development of Communities of Concern maps during the 2016-2017 cycle. Communities of Concern supplements Environmental Justice as an expanded set of disadvantage-linked

characteristics to acknowledge those who may face unique and often overwhelming obstacles related to transportation and engagement in MPO participation processes. A Community of Concern is any block group at least one standard deviation above the median in two or more of the following characteristics:

- Minority population
- Elderly population
- Limited English Proficiency population
- Disability
- Zero vehicle households
- Youth
- Income

Maps detailing the distribution of Communities of Concern and Environmental Justice populations are available in the MPO's 2018 Title VI/Nondiscrimination Plan. An update on this information should be available after the census is complete and the new data is provided.

The agency continues to maintain a community Health Atlas in order to provide communities and planners information on chronic disease, demographics, food access, transportation, emergency preparedness, and environmental indicators within our communities.

Listing all MPO committee members' demographic data

As part of the 2018 Public Participation Plan, MPO staff collected demographic data to determine whether committee demography reflected that of Hillsborough County. This information is published as an [appendix to the 2020 Public Participation Plan](#).

Participation opportunities offered to American Indian entities

The MPO continues to ensure that tribal contacts receive agenda packets and Transportation Improvement Plan documents. The MPO has identified the contacts and placed them in its Constant Contact database. They also receive the MPO's monthly electronic newsletters which contain articles of transportation plans and projects. Lastly, tribal governments participate in the State's Efficient Transportation Decision Making process, which uses a web-based tool to provide information and map data to, and solicit comments from, agencies potentially affected by future plans and projects.