



BOWLING GREEN & WARREN COUNTY
**Metropolitan Planning
Organization**

PARTICIPATION PLAN

A plan outlining participation efforts undertaken by the MPO throughout the transportation planning process for the Bowling Green-Warren County area.

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INTRODUCTION

The Bowling Green-Warren County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) provides a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process for Bowling Green and Warren County. As part of a successful transportation planning process, the MPO is committed to a proactive approach for engaging the public involving various participation methods, described in detail in the sections to follow. The public is largely affected by transportation plans, programs, and investment endeavors, which makes engaging with them on all levels of transportation planning a critical component of the MPO. Participation efforts shall seek to offer equal opportunities for all residents while being informative and shall provoke diverse and new ideas, promote creative problem solving, and impart a sense of ownership in the solutions.

ABOUT THE MPO

The Bowling Green-Warren County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was officially established in 2003. Federal law requires the formation of a MPO for any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000. MPOs were created in order to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on the 3-C planning process. Federal funding for transportation projects and programs are channeled through this planning process. The MPO serves as a platform for coordination and communication between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and transportation topics, plans, programs, and projects. The MPO develops both long- and short-range multimodal transportation plans, selects and approves projects for federal funding based upon regional priorities, and develops methods to improve problematic and unsafe corridors.

A core function of the MPO is to ensure that local people and governments are represented in a fair and impartial setting in the transportation planning process. In order to ensure these efforts are met the MPO works with local, state, and federal governments; including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Authority Administration (FTA), Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), GO bg Transit, Western Kentucky University, area stakeholders and the community at large. With a rapidly growing population representing diverse demographics, it is crucial for the MPO to involve local agencies and stakeholders, while also informing the public on relevant transportation issues and planning endeavors.

The MPO functions through committees and is served by planning staff, housed at the City-County Planning Commission of Warren County.

- **MPO Policy Committee (PC)** – The PC is the formal decision-making body of the MPO. This group reviews the transportation plans and programs, and annually endorses a course of action for implementing these plans. It is comprised of five members, of which three are voting members. The voting members include the Mayor of the City of Bowling Green, the Judge-Executive of Warren County, and the Secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. The non-voting members include the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Administrator, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Regional Administrator. The PC is responsible for providing opportunities for citizen participation in the transportation planning process.
- **MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** – The TAC advises and provides technical guidance and assistance to the PC in carrying out the goals and objectives of the MPO; the TAC provides

recommendations to the MPO PC. This committee is comprised of representatives from organizations that have a direct involvement in the planning or operation of transportation facilities throughout Warren County.

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)** – The MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is a subcommittee of the MPO TAC. The BPAC provides a forum of communication and collaboration for the bicycle and pedestrian community and public officials alike. The focus areas of the BPAC are to plan, advise, advocate, and educate. The MPO BPAC makes recommendations to the MPO TAC, which then proceeds to the MPO PC for final decision. With all transportation modes (highway, transit, bike-ped) under the planning efforts of the MPO, the MPO better represents a multimodal system where all forms of transportation are recognized and planned within a single entity.

Planning staff coordinates materials, plans, projects, prepares committee meeting content, makes recommendations to the TAC, and provides staff services for all MPO-related work. The City-County Planning Commission of Warren County houses the MPO and all planning staff.

REGULATIONS and REQUIREMENTS

The following laws and regulations provide guidance regarding the MPO’s participation process.

Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

The FAST Act replaced MAP-21 and became law on December 7, 2015. The new law authorizes Federal transportation programs for Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016 through FFY 2020. Requirements for planning and investing in the nation’s surface transportation infrastructure are outlined in the FAST Act. MPO Staff, in coordination with USDOT and KYTC, will initiate efforts to carry out each of the planning directives thoughtfully and thoroughly for the on-going transportation planning process and will consider the directives with all current MPO documents. Staff will also monitor emerging performance measures and participate in discussions with KYTC and other MPOs on the transition to performance-based planning and forthcoming performance targets.

Federal requirements for the public participation activities were issued in the Code of Federal Regulations, 23 CFR Part 450.316, by the US Department of Transportation. MPOs must utilize a Participation Plan (PP) that is developed in consultation with interested parties and is formally adopted after ample opportunity for public input. The plan must be in place prior to the MPO adopting the MTP and TIP since it outlines the participation process to be followed for developing and adopting these documents.

23 CFR 450.316

- 1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcome for:
 - i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed MTP and TIP;
 - ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
 - iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe the MTP and TIP;

- iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means;
 - 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 MTP and 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 MTP or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from public involvement efforts;
 - ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce the redundancies and costs; and
 - x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and the 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 MTP and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (*40 CFR Part 93*), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as a part of the final MTP and TIP.
 - 3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial 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 MPO website.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving Federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation. Title 49 CFR Part 21 outlines how agencies must ensure nondiscrimination in their programs and in their use of federal funds provided through the Department of Transportation.

Subsequent federal acts that extend nondiscrimination requirements include gender (Federal Aid Highway Act 1973); disability (Rehabilitation Act of 1973 & Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990); and age (Age Discrimination Act of 1975).

Executive Orders

An Executive Order is an order given by the President to federal agencies. As a recipient of federal revenues, the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO assists federal transportation agencies in complying with these orders.

Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. This Executive Order directs federal agencies or those receiving federal funds to include environmental justice as part of their mission. The fundamental principles of environmental justice include:

- Avoiding, minimizing or mitigating disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations;
- Ensuring full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and

- Preventing the denial, reduction or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority population and low-income communities.

Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency. This Executive Order states that people who speak limited English should have meaningful access to federally conducted and federally funded programs and activities. It requires that all federal agencies identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency and develop and implement a system to provide access to those services.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and US Department of Transportation regulations “Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities”. Meetings and hearings must be held in ADA-compliant buildings and special accommodations must be made for those with disabilities to participate in meetings, and planning and programming activities.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The policies and programs of the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO should avoid disproportionately negative impacts on minority and low-income populations. Within the context of the region, the transportation infrastructure and public transit system should provide for an equitable distribution of benefits to all areas and population groups. Where needed, the transportation system should provide equal access to the benefits of employment, education, and community. Prior to determining the overall policies and programs of the MPO, a demographic analysis had to be conducted to evaluate the current demographics for the region.

Warren County had a total population of 125,532 according to U.S. Census Bureau 2016 population estimates; Bowling Green had a total population of 65,234. The County experienced a 10.3% population change from the 2010 to 2016 estimates. From these estimates, the following demographic characteristics are defined for Warren County:

Warren County Race and Hispanic Origin (2016 Estimates)							
Total Population	White	Black or African American	American Indian / Alaska Native	Asian	Native HI / Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino
125,532	84.3%	9.3%	0.3%	3.6%	0.3%	2.3%	5.2%

Figure 1 Warren County Demographics

Over the past twenty years, Warren County has experienced a great influx of foreign born persons – one of the highest county percentages in the state of Kentucky. Much of this is attributed to refugee resettlement efforts through the International Center of Kentucky (ICKY). Foreign born residents made up 9.3% of the County’s population; whereas the City’s foreign born population was 14.3%. Additionally, 16.9% of the City and 11.6% of the County populations spoke a language other than English at home. Understanding the percentage of a population with a disability is also critical in planning for transportation, as this population of people often times rely more heavily on the public transit system. Warren County records 11.7% of the population under the age of 65 with a disability. Overall, the total percentage of persons in poverty is 18.5% and 28.5% in Warren County and Bowling Green, respectively.¹ A 2012 survey indicated that of the 11,327 business firms in

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) and Puerto Rico Community Survey (PRCS), 5-Year Estimates, 2012 - 2016.

Warren County, 898, or about 8%, were minority-owned firms.² **Appendix D** provides maps of the various demographics in the MPO area.

PARTICIPATION PROCESS for PLANS & PROGRAMS

The Bowling Green-Warren County MPO oversees the development of four major transportation documents: the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Participation Plan (PP). The MPO is responsible for outlining a participation process for the development and adoption of these plans and programs. The establishment of these plans and programs guide the allocation of federal and state transportation expenditures in the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO area.

The following table (*Figure 2*) outlines the participation efforts required for the abovementioned documents and their associated modifications and/or amendments, as regulated and required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Agency Administration (FTA), and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC).

Public Notification & Review Periods for MPO Documents

Plan Document	Review Period	Public Meetings	Public Notice*
Participation Plan (PP)	45 days	Optional	Web/PR
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	30 days	One minimum	Web/PR
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	30 days	Optional	Web/PR
Multimodal / Focal Point Plans (Bike/Ped, Transit)	30 days	One minimum	Web/PR
TIP & MTP Amendment	15 days	Optional	Web/PR
TIP & MTP Modification	-	N/A	Web
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	-	N/A	Web
Annual Performance & Expenditure Report	-	N/A	Web
Annual Listing of Obligated Transportation Projects	-	N/A	Web

*Public Notice Key: (Web) MPO Website; (PR) Press Release

Figure 2 – Bowling Green-Warren County MPO Documents & Public Review Periods

Participation Plan (PP)

The Participation Plan provides the framework for public and stakeholder involvement throughout the MPO’s transportation planning process. It also outlines the formal adoption processes for the MPO’s required documents, as listed above in *Figure 2*.

The Bowling Green-Warren County MPO’s public notification and input process for the PP shall be as follows:

- a) The plan update will be announced at scheduled MPO committee meetings.
- b) The draft Participation Plan will be made available for preliminary review and comment by the MPO TAC.
- c) After preliminary review by the MPO TAC, the proposed draft Participation Plan will be available for public review and comment for 45 days.
 - a. The proposed draft Participation Plan will be published on the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO’s website at www.bgareampo.org and paper copies will be available for review at the

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Economic Census: Survey of Business Owners.

MPO office, the Warren County Public Library Downtown, and the Bowling Green City Hall. If circumstances warrant, as stated in the section Public Notice and Comment Procedures for In-Person and Virtual Meetings, paper copies will not be placed at physical locations. In these circumstances, the MPO will rely on virtual and digital formats for review and comment.

- d) Outreach to stakeholders will include notification to MPO committees and the Interagency consultation contacts list listed in **Appendix A**.
- e) Public outreach to promote the availability of drafts and to encourage public comment will include a press release issued to media contacts, as identified in **Appendix B**.
- f) Should the received comments on the draft Participation Plan result in substantial changes, the Participation Plan will be made available for an additional 21-day public review and comment period reflecting the initial submitted comments.
- g) All public and stakeholder comments received during the review process will be addressed and incorporated as appropriate into the final Participation Plan.
- h) All comments received will be included in **Appendix C**.

The MPO will continually work to improve and incorporate additional public engagement efforts into the participation process. The MPO will perform an annual review of the Participation Plan, making modifications or updates as needed including revisions to committee membership, interagency consultation contacts, and census data. These minor revisions will not require public review or notification. The MPO will conduct a formal update of the Participation Plan at a minimum of every five years.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The MTP is the document used to address the future transportation system needs for the region over a 20 to 30 year period. For this reason, public participation is critical to updating such a document that provides the vision of the region for transporting goods, services, and people by automobile, bus, truck, bicycle, walking, and other means. The MTP is a fiscally constrained document, outlining short-term and long-range transportation programs, projects, and strategies to integrate and support all modes of transportation within the MPO area. The document is reviewed and updated every five (5) years.

Federal regulations ([23 CFR 450.324](#)) require all transportation planning documents provide opportunity for public official and citizen involvement in the development process and procedures for metropolitan transportation plans. The MTP public review and participation process should provide opportunities for early and meaningful public involvement in the Plan development. The participation process is designed to communicate the vision of the MPO and future of the transportation system with the public and local stakeholders, while seeking to gather input regarding the goals and objectives, planning analysis, project priorities, and final draft. All public input and/or comments received throughout the review and update process are summarized and documented in the MTP.

Specific participation efforts for the MTP are as follows:

- a) **Public Communication/Outreach** – Proactive participation techniques will be employed to involve citizens and provide full access to information and technical data. The techniques will generally include, but are not limited to public meetings, written and internet/email comments, focus groups, newsletters, public service announcements, media outlets, and surveys/questionnaires.
- b) **Public Meetings** – A minimum of one public meeting will be held at a meaningful and easily accessible location within the MPO area; meeting site and time will be selected to encourage the greatest

participation. Meetings may be held in-person or virtually (see the section Public Notice and Comment Procedures for In-Person and Virtual Meetings for further guidance). Additional public meetings may be held as determined necessary by the MPO. Creative visualization techniques will be used to enhance the public interest in projects. These may include but are not limited to: PowerPoint presentations, computer simulations, graphic design and artwork, maps, video recordings, and handouts.

- i) One public meeting will be held early in the process to identify the community's vision and goals for the transportation system.
 - ii) A press release and other notification methods will be published one week prior to the public meeting date. Other public notification efforts may be used, as outlined in the general guidelines.
- c) **Coordination and Consultation** – Letters or email correspondence will be sent to local, state and federal planning and resource agencies early in development of the MTP or update as an initial consultation. When the draft plan or update is available for the 30-day public comment period (see below), the agencies will be notified as to the availability of the plan for their comment. Correspondence will include a link to the MPO website of the draft or final document for the agency's review and comment. No hard copies are required unless specifically requested by the agency. A list of these agencies is provided in **Appendix A**. All agency input and comments received will be documented with appropriate responses by the MPO in the final version of the MTP.
- d) **Public Review and Comment Period** – The public will be notified of the availability of the draft MTP for review and comment, where to send written comments, and addresses and phone numbers of contact persons. Written text draft plans will be available for public review on the website and made available at the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO office, the City of Bowling Green (City Hall), and the Warren County Downtown Public Library. If circumstances warrant, as stated in the section Public Notice and Comment Procedures for In-Person and Virtual Meetings, paper copies will not be placed at physical locations. In these circumstances, the MPO will rely on virtual and digital formats for review and comment.
- i) A public notice press release will be sent to the media outlets.
 - ii) The public comment period will be a minimum 30 days, effective from the date of the public notice publication. Written comments will be received during the comment period and will be directed to the MPO.
- e) **Public Comments** – The TAC will assemble all comments and forward to the PC for their action. The PC may choose to hold a public meeting before adopting any plan update. Comments regarding the draft plan will be considered and addressed before adopting the final plan. If the public comments result in significant and major revisions to the MTP, the plan will be made available for an additional 21-day comment period.
- f) **PC Approval** – The TAC will recommend the final MTP for approval by the PC. Upon the PC's approval, the MPO will submit the approved MTP to the KYTC for the incorporation into the State Transportation Plan (STP).

MTP Amendments

Amendments are major revisions to the MTP, such as adding or deleting a significant project or major changes to a project; changes to illustrative projects included in the MTP do not require amendments. Amendments require a 15-day public review and comment period. Notification procedures for MTP amendments are outlined in the proceeding sections.

MTP Modifications

Modifications are minor changes and/or corrections to the MTP, such as changes/corrections to phasing, costs, funding sources, or initiation dates. No public review and comment period is required for an Administrative Modification. Additionally, transportation projects of the types listed in Grouped Projects (*Figure 3*) may also be added by an Administrative Modification. Modifications will be posted to the MPO website and distributed to appropriate MPO committees and stakeholder agencies.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Since the TIP is a subset of the MTP where public meetings were held in its development and all transportation funding is through the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, no public meetings will be held for the TIP or TIP amendments unless otherwise directed by the MPO Policy Committee. The TIP lists all federally funded transportation improvements (roadways, pedestrian facilities, and transit facilities) for a minimum of four years into the future. The TIP is the mechanism used to implement the projects identified in the MTP. The MPO will seek early and meaningful public input in the development and/or update of the TIP. The MPO will ensure all state and federal regulations required for TIPs are followed and met.

Specific participation efforts for the TIP shall follow the guidelines set forth for MTP updates and shall include steps (a), (c), (d), (e), and (f) listed under the MTP update and identified below. The TIP update shall also comply with Federal Transit Agency (FTA) Program of Projects (POP) requirements, as outlined in a later section of this document.

- Public Communication/Outreach
- Coordination & Consultation
- Public Review & Comment Period
- Public Comments
- PC Approval

TIP Amendments

Amendments to the TIP are required when:

- Adding or deleting a project or project phase that requires a federal action and is not eligible for an Administrative Modification (refer to next section).
- A change is required in the design concept or scope for a project.
- A project cost change is made that affects financial constraint.
- A change in funding source from non-federal to federal funds is required.

The Bowling Green-Warren County MPO's participation procedures for TIP amendments are as follows:

- a) TIP Amendments shall include a description sufficient to clearly identify the project and include the estimated cost, the location, project sponsor, and sources of funds.
- b) All TIP Amendments must be consistent with long-range plans (MTP) or include corresponding language to amend the MTP.
- c) TIP Amendments will be posted on the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO website.
- d) The public will be notified of a 15-day public review and comment period, effective from the date of the notice. Notifications shall include where to send written/digital comments, in addition to language regarding compliance with FTA POP requirements.

- e) Upon notification of the Amendment to the appropriate MPO committee(s), the MPO shall distribute the Amendment to agencies/stakeholders identified on the most up-to-date KYTC Routing Sheet & Information Sheet. The notification shall describe the action taken and assurance that the Amendment process and appropriate public involvement procedures have been followed.

TIP Administrative Modifications

Public review is not required for administrative changes to the MTP. Administrative Modifications will be included as agenda items for the TAC and PC meetings. The public may offer comments as part of the PC and TAC meeting's public comment time on the agenda. All TIP administrative modifications will be posted on the MPO website and distributed to agencies/stakeholders identified on the [KYTC Routing & Information Sheet](#).

Administrative Modifications to the TIP include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Correcting obvious minor data entry errors;
- Splitting or combining projects without modifying the original project intent;
- Changing or clarifying elements of a project description (with no change in funding) – this change would not alter the original project intent;
- Moving a project from one federal funding category to another;
- Moving a regionally significant state-funded project already identified in the TIP to a federal funding source;
- Moving a project from federal funding to state funding;
- Shifting the schedule of a project or phase within the years covered by the TIP (with no impact to fiscal constraint);
- Moving any identified project phase programmed for previous year into a new TIP (rollover provision);
- Updating project cost estimates (within the original project scope and intent) that do not impact fiscal constraint;
- Adding a preconstruction phase for a project shown in the TIP with a construction phase; and/or
- The addition of a project of a type included in the list of Grouped Projects (see Grouped Projects section below).

Administrative Modifications for Grouped Projects

There are various highway improvement projects that are considered non-controversial and produce negligible impacts other than positive benefits for safety, traffic operations, and system preservation. These types of projects typically address necessary traffic maintenance activities to correct existing problems and/or deficiencies, or they may be the result of a successful grant application by local governments or entities. These projects are usually identified by category, rather than specific location, in the MTP and TIP. Allowing Grouped Projects to be processed as administrative modifications streamlines the transportation planning process and allows projects to be authorized without unnecessary delay.

The Grouped Projects that may be added to the MTP or TIP as administrative modifications are identified in *Figure 3* below. By listing these Grouped Project types in the Participation Plan, planning process stakeholders and the general public are informed of the types of potential projects that may be added to

the MTP/TIP in the future via streamlined procedures. MTP/TIP actions for these projects will not require additional public review, demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (if applicable). These modifications are posted to the MPO website and the public may offer comments in writing to the MPO at any time or at the TAC and PC meetings. Any project listed in **Figure 3** could be subject to public involvement requirements if the MPO, in consultation with KYTC, determines that public review is appropriate due to potential for controversy, negative impacts, or other public concern.

Figure 3 Grouped Projects
<u>HSIP – Highway Safety Improvement Program Implementation</u>
<u>Intersection Improvements for Safety or Efficiency</u>
<u>Guardrail, Median Barrier, and Crash Cushion Projects</u>
<u>Other Highway Safety Improvements</u>
<u>Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Projects</u>
<u>Traffic Signal System Improvements</u>
<u>Highway Signing</u>
<u>Pavement Markers and Striping</u>
<u>Pavement Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation</u>
<u>Bridge Replacement (no additional lanes)</u>
<u>Bridge Rehabilitation</u>
<u>Bridge Inspection</u>
<u>Bridge Painting</u>
<u>Railroad/Highway Crossing Protection</u>
<u>Recreational Trails Projects</u>
<u>Transportation Alternatives Projects</u>
<u>Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Projects**</u>
<u>Commuter Ridesharing Programs</u>
<u>Bicycle Facilities</u>
<u>Pedestrian Facilities</u>
<u>Park & Ride Facilities</u>
<u>Purchase of New Buses</u>
<u>Rehabilitation of Transit Vehicles</u>
<u>Transit Operating Assistance</u>
<u>Transit Operating Equipment</u>
<u>Small Transit Passenger Shelters and Informational Kiosks</u>

Figure 3 - Grouped Projects

***The Bowling Green MPO area is not currently eligible for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program funds. However, if Warren County becomes designated as an air quality non-attainment area in the future, local entities would become qualified to submit applications for eligible CMAQ funded projects.*

FTA Program of Projects (POP) Participation Requirements

Community Action of Southern Kentucky DBA the Bowling Green Public Transit System operates “GO bg Transit.” Annually, GO bg Transit is required to prepare a Program of Projects (POP) and solicit public input for all projects receiving federal transit funding from FTA. The projects identified in the POP are added to the TIP through an annual amendment or administrative modification. The MPO TAC meetings will be used as the forum for public comment. The Bowling Green MPO, GO bg Transit and KYTC have agreed that the

public and agency outreach procedures for the TIP Amendment and Administrative Modification process included in the MPO's Participation Plan are adequate to meet the public input required for the POP and meet the intent of the federal planning regulations. All public notices issued by the MPO for public involvement activities such as public meetings, draft plans, etc., along with the public review and comment period for the TIP, will include a specific statement that these participation efforts satisfy POP requirements.

Annual Listing of Obligated Transportation Projects

Each year, the MPO publishes an annual listing of projects in which federal highway or transit funds were obligated during the preceding program year, as denoted in the adopted TIP. This listing is typically completed in December and will be available on the MPO website or upon request by contacting the MPO office. See [*23 CFR 450.334 Metropolitan Planning Process: Annual Listing of Obligated Projects*](#).

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP outlines the planning activities and budget of the MPO. The UPWP is updated annually to include specific transportation planning work tasks that the MPO and its partner agencies will undertake throughout the specific fiscal year. Though a public review and comment period is not required for the UPWP, the MPO will distribute drafts of the UPWP to local, state, and federal planning agencies for review and comment. Drafts will also be posted on the MPO website, should the public desire to provide comment. Upon receipt of local, state, and federal stakeholder comments, the MPO will develop the final UPWP and distribute to planning partners, as identified on the [KYTC Distribution & Routing Information Sheet](#).

Annual Performance and Expenditure Report

The MPO is required to draft and distribute an annual report detailing the work and products completed by the MPO during the previous fiscal year, as outlined in the in that fiscal year's adopted UPWP. This report includes a budget analysis of budgeted verses actual expenditures. The P&E Report will be made available on the MPO website or upon request by contacting the MPO office.

Multimodal / Focal Point Plans

The MPO may develop additional plans or studies to augment the MTP and assist in carrying out the goals and objectives of the MTP. These additional plans may include areas within Bike/Pedestrian, Transit, high-growth corridors, access management, etc. These plans may be amended into the MTP or may be adopted as separate documents. Strategies for outreach and stakeholder involvement for these plans may vary amongst the different programs and projects, but should meet all participation requirements listed for Multimodal / Focal Point Plans shown in *Figure 2* and MTP Amendments, if amended into the MTP.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

Interagency Consultation

One of the foundations of MPOs is the 3C planning process – planning for the transportation system in a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative effort by and between local, state, and federal agencies. With this, a key component is involving the MPO's partnering agencies through coordination and consultation. The Bowling Green-Warren County MPO actively works with the City of Bowling Green Public Works and other City departments, Warren County Public Works, and the KYTC District 3. Though many other agencies and

organizations are consulted on various MPO-related matters, such as GO bg Transit and Western Kentucky University; the City, County, and State are the primary sources of communication and coordination.

As major stakeholders, the MPO, KYTC, and GO bg Transit Agency established a Planning Agreement outlining specific coordinating roles and responsibilities of each agency and is available on the MPO's website. Additionally, a list of agencies, organizations, and stakeholders that the MPO coordinates with for any transportation planning documents are identified in **Appendix A**. In addition to these formally defined responsibilities, the MPO informally coordinates with its stakeholders on a regular basis through interactions and committee meetings – both held by the MPO or in which the MPO is a participant.

Committee Meetings

Policy Committee (PC)

The MPO Policy Committee is the decision-making body of the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO. The PC is comprised of five members, of which three are voting members. The voting members include the Mayor of the City of Bowling Green, the Judge-Executive of Warren County, and the Secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. The non-voting members include the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Administrator, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Regional Administrator. The MPO Bylaws further outline the roles and responsibilities of the MPO committees, such as the PC.

The PC meets on a quarterly basis. Special meetings may be called upon the request of the Chair. Notices of the PC meetings will be distributed to those on the PC distribution list and placed on the website at least 7 days prior to the meeting. Notice of Special-Called Meetings shall be given to the members of the PC at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to such meetings and shall state the purpose, date, and time of the meeting. All meetings of the PC are open to the public and anyone can be placed on the PC mailing list upon request. The meetings are advertised on the MPO Meeting Calendar located on the MPO website.

The PC acknowledges public comments in two ways. The PC may incorporate public comment and the MPO's response into the meeting minutes, with a copy distributed to the commenter or the PC may instruct staff to respond directly to the commenter by letter or email. This lets the public know that their comment and concern has been heard, considered, and will be addressed appropriately.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Subcommittees

The MPO's Technical Advisory Committee exists to advise and provide technical guidance and assistance to the MPO PC, while furthering consultation and coordination among affected stakeholders. One subcommittee also provides additional input and focus on specific multimodal transportation issues, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

The TAC meets on a monthly basis and the BPAC meets bi-monthly. All meetings are open to the public and citizens/stakeholders may attend based on their interest areas. Upon request, anyone can be placed on the TAC mailing list. The meetings provide opportunity for public comment and allow a forum for open communication among MPO stakeholders and the public. All meeting schedules are posted on the MPO website, but are subject to change on an as-needed basis. The meetings are advertised on the MPO Meeting Calendar located on the MPO website.

Public Notice and Comment Procedures for In-Person and Virtual Meetings

MPO committee meetings and public meetings are typically held in person, but may be held virtually if circumstances warrant, including during a declared State of Emergency; under the threat of, or confirmed natural or public health disaster; or in response to guidance issued by emergency response, public health or government officials. Virtual meetings may be held outside of the circumstances listed above if it is deemed necessary and relevant that a virtual meeting platform better serves the needs of the MPO. This may include special-called MPO Policy Committee meetings and other public involvement initiatives. Virtual meetings allow the MPO to provide a continuity of service and communication despite the meeting platform. Virtual meetings may also allow enhanced opportunities for individuals who would not typically have the time or transportation to attend a regular public meeting to provide meaningful input and feedback in the MPO planning process.

All MPO committee meetings, whether in person or virtual, are open to the public. Meeting notices are posted on the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO website under Meeting Materials at: www.bgareampo.org. Notices will clearly indicate whether meetings will be held in person or virtually and include the time and physical meeting location and/or virtual meeting web links and associated call-in numbers. All virtual meeting platforms utilized by the MPO shall allow the public to use an audio-only call-in number, in addition to video conferencing capabilities, to listen to public meetings.

Voting members of MPO committees must be visible and audible during virtual meetings in order to participate in any formal committee action. Members of the public must only be audible during virtual meetings (video conferencing not required) in order to provide public comment to the committee. In virtual meeting platforms, members of the public may also utilize the chat box feature to submit written questions and comments. The procedure for public comment during MPO virtual meetings (committee and/or public) shall be clearly stated at the beginning of the meeting and/or at the start of the official public comment agenda item. Members of the public may also elect to submit their comments in writing either by email or mail in advance of the meeting in order to be read into the public record (attendance not required). Comments must be received by the MPO at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Public Meetings | Events

When public meetings are determined to be the most beneficial and expedient means of obtaining public input, the MPO commits to holding such meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, **either virtually or in-person**. The MPO will provide timely notice of these meetings by publishing a public notice of a meeting at least one week in advance of the scheduled dates. Public notices will be distributed to all media outlets in the MPO area. The meeting notice will also be placed on the MPO website www.bgareampo.org. Notification will be sent to all local media outlets identified in **Appendix B**.

Media Outreach

The MPO informs the public through local media outlets, as listed in **Appendix B**, via legal ads, formal press releases, or paid advertisements (when appropriate). This includes radio, daily and weekly newspapers, monthly magazines, or regional television.

Website

The Bowling Green-Warren County MPO website can be found at www.bgareampo.org. It provides an explanation of the MPO and its purpose, while also providing the primary means by which the MPO makes information readily available to the public. All MPO documents, contacts, committee and meeting information,

along with sub-pages providing information related to the area's public transit providers and bicycle and pedestrian facilities are included on the MPO website. Traditional media sources, newsletters, emails, and other forms of notification direct users and interested parties to the site. The website also serves as a medium for communicating information, surveys, updates, and other relevant data related to specific MPO studies, plans or projects.

The MPO website is regularly updated to communicate up-to-date information and continually serves as a medium to improve the public's ease for obtaining necessary information regarding the community's transportation system – highway, transit, or bicycle and pedestrian.

Traveling Exhibits | Visual Displays

The MPO will participate in various existing community events or activities, as deemed appropriate and relevant by the MPO. Participation in these events or activities should be a means to help inform the public about the MPO and transportation planning process. They may also serve as an opportunity to connect one-on-one, collect information from community members, or engage with the public on transportation or study-specific issues.

Newsletters

The MPO distributes a quarterly newsletter in conjunction with the City-County Planning Commission. The newsletter is distributed via email and handed out to the MPO/CCPC committees, as requested. In addition to the MPO's newsletter distribution list, other local government agencies share the newsletter among their staff (WKU, City of Bowling Green). Currently, the MPO custom designs and distributes the newsletter, but will explore the use of an e-newsletter distribution database. All newsletters are posted on the MPO website.

Accommodations for Special Populations

The MPO works to reach out to special populations, traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, that may face challenges accessing employment and other services. These populations may include: low-income and minority households, persons with disabilities, and persons with limited English proficiency. The MPO makes intentional efforts to plan public meetings and events at facilities that are ADA compliant, and at convenient and accessible locations and times.

Currently, there are no MPO staff members who speak another language besides English. The MPO will communicate with the Community Services Specialist/International Communities Liaison for interpretation services. The Community Services Specialist/International Communities Liaison can be contacted at:

Leyda Becker

Community Services Specialist/International Communities Liaison

Phone: (270) 393-3766

Email: leyda.becker@bqky.org

To request special accommodations or translation services, people can contact the MPO directly via email or phone. The public is asked to provide the MPO staff with as much notice as possible, so they can best provide for any special accommodations that may be necessary in order for them to participate in any public events. Additional information on the MPO's nondiscrimination obligations and procedures regarding Title VI complaints can be found on the MPO website.

APPENDIX A – Consultation Contact List

Local Civic and Outreach Groups	Local Agency/Business Consultation
<p>Associated Builders & Contractors Barren River Adult Day Care Best Center for Independent Living Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce Cave Country Trails Council for the Blind- South Central Hispanic Resource Center Human Rights Commission International Center – Bowling Green International Center - WKU Lifeskills NAACP Bowling Green Chapter United Way of Southern Kentucky VFW Post 1298 Vocational Rehab Warren County Senior Citizen Center Western Kentucky Active Day Center</p>	<p>Barren River District Health Department Bowling Green Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Bowling Green Fire Department Bowling Green Police Department Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Bowling Green Public Transit (Gobg transit) Bowling Green Public Works City of Oakland City of Plum Springs City of Woodburn Community Action of Southern Kentucky CSX Transportation INC. Housing Authority of Bowling Green Komfort Kabs Operation P.R.I.D.E. Warren County Public Library Warren County Parks and Recreation Kentucky Motor Transport Association (KMTA)</p>
Kentucky State Agency Consultation	Federal Agency Consultation
<p>Department for Local Government Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection Kentucky Department for Fish and Wildlife Resources Kentucky Department for Natural Resources Kentucky Division of Air Quality Kentucky Division of Forestry Kentucky Division of Water Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet Kentucky Heritage Council KYTC District 3 KYTC Division of Environmental Analysis KYTC Division of Planning KYTC Office of Local Programs KYTC Office of Transportation Delivery</p>	<p>US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) US Department of Agriculture (USDA) US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) - Region 4 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - KY Division US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) US Park Service</p>

APPENDIX B – Media Contacts

Media sources serving Warren County:

Print

Bowling Green Daily News

Television

WKYU

WBKO

WNKY

Insight

Radio

WKYU-FM

WBGN WUHU WBVR

WGGC 95

WKCT WDNS

WOVO WKLX

WKNT

**Media sources serving counties and cities outside of Warren County are on file with the MPO, but are not included for the purposes of the MPO outreach efforts. Should measures be necessary to reach surrounding counties, the MPO will utilize its additional contacts.*

APPENDIX C – Public Comments on Participation Plan

No public or agency comments were received.

APPENDIX D – Demographics for Traditionally Underserved Populations

Using US Census data to index a variety of factors affecting the MPO area residents, MPO staff analyzed characteristics relating to environmental justice and social equity between various segments of the community. The geographic nature of the data allowed the creation of a Vulnerable Population (VP) map series and analysis. From this, staff was able to determine areas that may be at higher risk to social vulnerabilities (i.e., areas at higher risk of human suffering and/or economic loss).

These socially vulnerable areas are protected by national policies, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Presidential Executive Orders 12898 and 13166. Identifying these factors within these communities helps the MPO ensure equity in distribution of transportation services, facilities, and resources within the community without regard to income, race, age, ability, and other socioeconomic factors.

To identify VPs, a regional (county wide) average for at risk socioeconomic demographics was established utilizing the 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. The value was then utilized as a threshold and compared to the average per census tract. Tracts where the average met or exceeded the regional averages were identified and socially vulnerable populations mapped accordingly.

The Socioeconomic Vulnerability Index (SVI) was created by totaling populations exceeding the regional threshold. Project locations are evaluated in terms of ensuring an equitable distribution of transportation improvements for all residents of the region. The SVI may be utilized to examine whether projects could have real or perceived negative impacts in areas where there are higher concentration of VPs. The maps on the following pages depict these characteristics.



