

Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Old Colony Public Participation Plan (PPP)

- **Endorsed by the Old Colony MPO on August 17, 2021**

Prepared Under:

FFY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Task 1300 and MassDOT Contract 112307

Prepared By:

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Notice of Nondiscrimination Rights and Protections to Beneficiaries

Federal “Title VI/Nondiscrimination” Protections

The Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of **race, color, or national origin** (including **limited English proficiency**), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or both prohibit discrimination on the basis of **age, sex, and disability**. These protected categories are contemplated within the Old Colony MPO’s Title VI Programs consistent with federal interpretation and administration. Additionally, the Old Colony MPO provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with US Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

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The Old Colony MPO also complies with the Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law, M.G.L. c 272 §§ 92a, 98, 98a, prohibiting making any distinction, discrimination, or restriction in admission to or treatment in a place of public accommodation based on **race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or ancestry**. Likewise, the Old Colony MPO complies with the Governor’s Executive Order 526, section 4 requiring all programs, activities, and services provided, performed, licensed, chartered, funded, regulated, or contracted for by the state shall be conducted without unlawful discrimination based on **race, color, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, disability, veteran's status** (including Vietnam-era veterans), or **background**.

Additional Information

To request additional information regarding Title VI and related federal and state nondiscrimination obligations, please contact:

Old Colony Planning Council
Title VI/ Nondiscrimination Coordinator
Mary Waldron
70 School Street
Brockton, MA 02301
508-583-1833 Extension 202
mwaldron@ocpcrpa.org

Title VI Specialist
MassDOT, Office of Diversity and Civil Rights
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
857-368-8580
TTY: 857-368-0603
MASSDOT.CivilRights@state.ma.us

Complaint Filing

To file a complaint alleging a violation of Title VI or related federal nondiscrimination law, contact the Title VI Specialist (above) within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory conduct.

To file a complaint alleging a violation of the state's Public Accommodation Law, contact the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination within 300 days of the alleged discriminatory conduct at:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)
One Ashburton Place, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02109
617-994-6000
TTY: 617-994-6196

Translation

English

If this information is needed in another language, please contact the MPO Title VI Coordinator at 508-583-1833 ext. 202.

Spanish

Si necesita esta información en otro idioma, por favor contacte al coordinador de MPO del Título VI al 508-583-1833 ext. 202.

Portuguese

Caso estas informações sejam necessárias em outro idioma, por favor, contate o Coordenador de Título VI da MPO pelo telefone 508-583-1833, Ramal 202

Chinese Simple

如果需要使用其它语言了解信息，请联系Old Colony大都会规划组织（MPO）《民权法案》第六章协调员，电话508- 583-1833，转202。

Chinese Traditional

如果需要使用其他語言瞭解資訊，請聯繫Old Colony大都會規劃組織（MPO）《民權法案》第六章協調員，電話508- 583-1833，轉202。

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Nếu quý vị cần thông tin này bằng tiếng khác, vui lòng liên hệ Điều phối viên Luật VI của MPO theo số điện thoại 508- 583-1833, số máy nhánh 202.

Haitian Creole

Si yon moun bezwen enfòmasyon sa a nan yon lòt lang, tanpri kontakte Koòdonatè a Title VI MPO nan 508-583-1833 ext. 202.

French Creole

Si yon moun vle genyen enfòmasyon sa yo nan yon lòt lang, tanpri kontakte Kowòdinatè MPO Title VI la nan nimewo 508-583-1833, ekstansyon 202.

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Если Вам необходима данная информация на любом другом языке, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с Координатором Титула VI в МРО по тел: 508-583-1833, добавочный 202.

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Si vous avez besoin d'obtenir une copie de la présente dans une autre langue, veuillez contacter le coordinateur du Titre VI de MPO en composant le 508-583-1833, poste 202.

Italian

Se ha bisogno di ricevere queste informazioni in un'altra lingua si prega di contattare il coordinatore MPO del Titolo VI al 508- 583-1833 interno 202

Mon-Khmer, Cambodian

ប្រសិនបើលោក-អ្នកត្រូវការរបកប្រែព័ត៌មាននេះ សូមទាក់ទងអ្នកសម្របសម្រួលជំពូកទី6 របស់ MPO តាមរយៈលេខទូរស័ព្ទ **508-583-1833** រួចភ្ជាប់ទៅលេខ **202**។

Arabic

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، يُرجى الاتصال بمنسق الفقرة السادسة لمنظمة التخطيط الحضري على الهاتف: 508- 583-1833 و ثم اضغط الأرقام 202.

Updated April 2021
Old Colony Planning Council

Introduction

The Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Public Participation Plan (PPP) establishes the process by which the MPO solicits public involvement and cooperative decision making as part of the transportation planning process. The Old Colony MPO strives to share information and collect ideas through public meetings and other strategies in order to improve the planning process and the regional transportation system.

In accordance with state and federal law requirements, and to ensure inclusive and accessible public engagement processes for transportation decision making, the Old Colony MPO has developed the Public Participation Plan. This Plan serves to guide agency public participation efforts, including populations that potentially have been underserved by the transportation system and/or have lacked access to the decision-making process. This Plan guides the MPO in its continued efforts to offer early, continuous, and meaningful opportunities for the public to help identify social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed transportation policies, projects and initiatives across the Old Colony MPO's jurisdiction.

The Plan is based on federal and state requirements for encouraging and ensuring community participation. It describes the Old Colony MPO's overall goals, guiding principles, and strategic approach to achieving stated objectives. The Plan also defines how the Old Colony MPO proposes to incorporate public participation into its transportation decision-making processes, how the agency ensures access for people with disabilities and the inclusion of low income and minority stakeholders, and how the MPO measures the effectiveness of its public participation program.

Specifically, the Plan states the methods that the MPO will use to reach out to persons who are low-income, minority, Limited English Proficient (LEP), have a disability, and other traditionally underrepresented populations. This Plan provides a toolbox of techniques to be applied, as appropriate, to achieve effective broad-based stakeholder participation because different transportation decisions require a variety of techniques to achieve effective communication among a diversity of stakeholders.

This Plan is a living document that will change and grow to help the Old Colony MPO deepen and sustain its work to engage diverse community members throughout the Old Colony region. Therefore, the Old Colony MPO will modify its public participation methods and activities over time, based on ideas and feedback from community members and the Old Colony MPO's evaluation of its public participation effectiveness. An update to the Plan will be given a 45-day public comment period. The Plan will be reviewed at a minimum every five (5) years; however, periodic review may be taken up at any time. The Plan is being developed based on guidelines provided through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and federal guidance documents. It is intended as a document that will govern the Old Colony MPO's public participation activities, but also serve as a useful guide for the metropolitan planning organizations and cities and towns the Old Colony MPO works with, as well as for the consultants we contract with for public engagement support.

The Plan also empowers the public through its clear definition of how the Old Colony MPO conducts its public participation activities. There may be occasions where facts or circumstances may not allow for absolute adherence with the protocols and policies stated. It is important to note that communities and entities within the Old Colony MPO may have their own specific policies and procedures for public engagement that are unique to the functions they carry out or the targeted audiences served, and in such instances, there may be departures from this Plan that are legitimate and reasonable.

OLD COLONY MPO STRUCTURE

The Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (Old Colony MPO) is the regional governing body established by federal law to oversee regional transportation planning and recommend the distribution of transportation funds locally. This includes the responsibilities for conducting an inclusionary “3C” planning process (continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive) for transportation planning in the 17 communities of the region for all modes of travel, including roadways and highways, public transportation, bicycles, pedestrians, connections to air, ferry, and railroads.

The transportation planning area covered by this plan includes the 17 communities of the Old Colony Region: Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Easton, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Kingston, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman, and includes Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT).

The Old Colony MPO is responsible for endorsing a number of Federal certification documents that include the Long Regional Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Discussion of these documents is included later in this section of the plan.

The staff of the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC), BAT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and MassDOT, along with staff of the local communities, participates in the process through preparation of the documents for MPO action.

The Old Colony MPO consists of eleven (11) members. The following eight (8) members are voting members: MassDOT; MassDOT Highway Division; BAT; OCPC; City of Brockton; Town of Plymouth; A Community with a population greater than 14,000; and a community with a population less than 14,000. The following three (3) members: Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Chairperson, FHWA, and FTA are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Old Colony MPO. The membership is outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1: OLD COLONY MPO MEMBERSHIP

Agency	Old Colony MPO Members
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	Secretary of Transportation
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Highway Division	Administrator
Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT)	Administrator
Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC)	President
City of Brockton	Mayor
Town of Plymouth	Chairman, Selectman
Community with a population greater than 14,000	Town Council President/ or Chairman, Board of Selectmen
Community with a population less than 14,000	Chairman, Board of Selectmen
Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC)	Chair
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Massachusetts Division Administrator
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Region 1 Administrator

Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Established in 2009, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is responsible for transportation planning as well as construction and operation of transportation infrastructure for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The organization oversees four divisions: Highway, Rail & Transit, Aeronautics and the Registry of Motor Vehicles, as well as Enterprise Services, which provide services to MassDOT divisions and the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA).

An eleven-member Board of Directors appointed by the Governor with expertise in transportation, finance and engineering oversees the organization. MassDOT is administered by a Secretary of Transportation, appointed by the Governor to serve as Chief Executive Officer.

MassDOT has two voting representatives on the Old Colony MPO: one representing the MassDOT Secretary/Chief Executive Officer and the other representing the MassDOT Highway Division Administrator. The officials may designate another official from within their respective agency to regularly represent the agency. As the implementing agency an affirmative vote is required by the MassDOT representatives to endorse federal certification documents.

Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT)

The Brockton Area Transit Authority, under the provisions of Chapter 161B of the General Laws, has the statutory responsibility to provide mass transportation in the area constituting the authority, and to provide mass transportation service under contract in areas outside the authority.

BAT, in addition to its statutory responsibility for providing mass transportation, assists in obtaining and ensuring input and participation in multimodal transportation planning from local elected officials and the public. BAT actively and consistently participates in the 3C transportation planning and programming process and represents the region's concern for public transportation deficiencies and for solutions to transportation demands and needs.

The Brockton Area Transit Authority, the FTA Section 5307 applicant, has consulted with the Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and concurs that the public involvement process adopted by the MPO for development of the TIP satisfies the public hearing requirements that pertain to the development of the Program of Projects (POP) for the Section 5307, Urbanized Area Formula Program, grant applications including the provisions for public notice and the time established for public review and comment.

The public participation process described herein is used to satisfy the public participation process for the POP for Brockton Area Transit Authority. Public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP will satisfy the POP requirements. BAT prepares a Program of Projects (POP) and it is included in the TIP. The public discussion of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at Old Colony JTC, Old Colony MPO, and transportation meetings satisfies the Program of Projects (POP) public hearing requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and is structured to comply with federal and state laws, regulations, executive orders, and related provisions requiring nondiscrimination in public engagement. The MPO's public participation process will also be used as Brockton Area Transit Authority's (BAT) public participation process and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) public participation process.

Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC)

Established by Chapter 332 of the Acts of 1967, OCPC is the regional planning agency for the metropolitan Brockton area. The Council's planning jurisdiction includes the City of Brockton and the towns of Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, Easton, Duxbury, Hanover, Hanson, Halifax, Kingston, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Stoughton, West Bridgewater and Whitman. The policy board is composed of one delegate and one alternate appointed by a vote of the Town Council or Board of Selectmen and Planning Board of each member community. In the case of the City of Brockton, the Mayor appoints the delegate and alternate. The Council is authorized to prepare and revise comprehensive plans. OCPC is recognized by the MPO as the officially designated regional planning agency for the Old Colony MPO Region, having the statutory responsibility for comprehensive planning, including transportation planning. Currently, the Council's areas of major emphasis are economic development, transportation, safety and security, water quality, land use and housing, and elder service planning and ombudsman programs.

OCPC is responsible for comprehensive regional planning and is the transportation-planning agency for the Old Colony MPO and Old Colony Region. OCPC maintains qualified transportation

planning staff and is principally responsible for the maintenance of the transportation planning process and for the support and operation of the Joint Transportation Committee and Old Colony MPO.

Local Representatives

The local representatives (Brockton, Plymouth, and the locally elected communities) to the Old Colony MPO are responsible for articulating a local government perspective of regional transportation problems and issues, and the needs for the community or agency that they represent, and for the Region as a whole. The communities of Brockton and Plymouth are permanent voting members of the Old Colony MPO.

In addition to the permanent voting member communities, the Old Colony MPO structure includes Chief Elected Officials from two (2) communities, other than Brockton or Plymouth to serve two-year terms, representing the other communities in the Old Colony Region.

- One Signatory Member from a community with a population less than 14,000 (based on the most recent decennial U.S. Census) (Avon, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Kingston, Plympton, and West Bridgewater)
- One Signatory Member from a community with a population over 14,000 (based on the most recent decennial U.S. Census) (Abington, Bridgewater, Duxbury, Easton, Pembroke, Stoughton, and Whitman)

In addition, the Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Chairperson, and one representative each from both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) shall be considered ex-officio, non-voting members of the Old Colony MPO.

Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC)

The Old Colony MPO has established a committee of technical professionals known as the Old Colony Joint Transportation Advisory Committee (JTC) to serve as the transportation advisory group to the MPO. The JTC Members consist of representatives of the seventeen communities of the Old Colony Region: Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Easton, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Kingston, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman, and the Brockton Area Transit Authority. These representatives are appointed by the chief elected officials of each community in the region.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that supports State and local governments in the design, construction, and maintenance of the Nation's highway system (Federal Aid Highway Program) and various federally and tribal owned lands (Federal Lands Highway Program). Through financial and technical assistance to State and local governments, the Federal Highway Administration is

responsible for ensuring that America's roads and highways continue to be among the safest and most technologically sound in the world.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) was created on October 15, 1966, after having had several predecessor organizations.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides financial and technical assistance to local public transit systems, including buses, subways, light rail, commuter rail, trolleys and ferries. FTA also oversees safety measures and helps develop next-generation technology research. Transit services supported by FTA span many groups and provide wide-ranging benefits.

Since 1964, FTA has partnered with state and local governments to create and enhance public transportation systems, investing funds to support and expand public rail, bus, trolley, ferry and other transit services. That investment has helped modernize public transportation and extended service into small cities and rural communities that previously lacked transit options.

Old Colony MPO PLANNING PRODUCTS

The Long Range Transportation Plan (RTP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), along with updates on other major studies or documents under development, are included on the JTC and MPO meeting agendas. Old Colony MPO staff presents to the MPO interim updates, draft documents for public comment release and final documents for endorsement. Documents are also presented to the JTC for recommendation on MPO action.

The Old Colony Planning Council staff frequently updates a meeting calendar with proposed agendas and links to documents are available on the [Old Colony Planning Council](#) website. Meeting materials are also emailed to those on OCPC's contact list and can be sent to individuals by request not on the contact list by calling or emailing OCPC in advance of the meeting date and time. Materials can also be made available via hard copy with 24-hour notice from the Old Colony Planning Council by contacting the office at 508-583-1833. If a public meeting is to be held virtually or have a virtual component, all meeting materials will be presented via video stream and can be downloaded via the virtual meeting platform's chat or document transfer medium.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) provides goals, policies, and objectives for the transportation system over the next 20 years. It is the long-range view of transportation based on existing system data and needs. Through the LRTP effort, the Old Colony MPO strives to assess the existing transportation system and its federal aid component, whether transit, highway, pedestrian, or other, and endeavors to improve the transportation system and its connections

for better mobility for residents, commuters, and visitors. The nine goals of the 2020 LRTP include: Safety, Infrastructure Condition (Pavement, Bridge, and Transit), Congestion Reduction, System Reliability, Freight Movement and Economic Vitality, Environmental Sustainability, Reduced Project Delivery Delay, Resiliency and Reliability of the Transportation System, and Travel and Tourism - Enhance Travel and Tourism.

The LRTP sets the long-range framework for the region, not only through specific projects, but also through the consensus on general direction and policies. The LRTP development process is an especially valuable time for the public to communicate ideas for improving general issues that need to be addressed.

The MPO staff must update the LRTP every four years, and additional specific studies may occur in the interim. Once the MPO approves the LRTP, it is submitted for review by state and federal authorities. The most recent LRTP was approved in 2019. The next LRTP is set for 2022. Changes to the LRTP require a change procedure, which requires a twenty-one-day public review period and formal endorsement by the MPO. Changes to the LRTP must undergo a public process consistent with the goals, guiding principles, and techniques of the PPP (detailed in the LRTP).

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) describes annual activities related to the transportation planning in the region. This includes data collection, development of the planning products, staff support for the MPO and JTC, and transportation studies to undertake in the region.

The UPWP is developed each year at public meetings of the MPO for the federal fiscal year that begins on October 1. Although the primary staff involvement is the Old Colony Planning Council, the staff activities of BAT and MassDOT relating to the region are also included.

The UPWP may undergo changes through an amendment process. This requires proposed changes to undergo a twenty-one (21) public review period and a formal endorsement by the MPO. Changes to the UPWP must undergo a public process consistent with the goals, guiding principles, and techniques of the PPP, which are detailed in the UPWP report. In addition, minor changes to the UPWP can be made in consultation with the MPO, and with MassDOT-OTP approval through the utilization of a Budget Reallocation Request Form.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Proponents of specific projects and programs move items toward implementation based on the recommendations of the LRTP. Projects advance to the list of funded items in the TIP based on an evaluation process by the MPO staff, the JTC, and the MPO. While the LRTP process requires covers a minimum of 20 years, the TIP comprises five (5) years of projects.

The TIP includes both "highway" and transit projects. "Highway" projects are typically

construction projects which include projects such as intersection improvements, roadway reconstruction, multi-use path construction, bridge repairs, and various maintenance activities. A list of transit projects for inclusion in the TIP is prepared by BAT. All projects programmed in the TIP must be within the anticipated funding available from federal, state, and other identified funding sources.

The Brockton Area Transit Authority, the FTA Section 5307 applicant, has consulted with the Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and concurs that the public involvement process adopted by the MPO for development of the TIP satisfies the public hearing requirements that pertain to the development of the Program of Projects (POP) for the Section 5307, Urbanized Area Formula Program, grant applications including the provisions for public notice and the time established for public review and comment.

The public participation process described herein is used to satisfy the public participation process for the POP for Brockton Area Transit Authority. Public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP will satisfy the POP requirements. BAT prepares a Program of Projects (POP) and it is included in the TIP. The public discussion of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at Old Colony JTC, Old Colony MPO, and transportation meetings satisfies the Program of Projects (POP) public hearing requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and are structured to comply with federal and state laws, regulations, executive orders, and related provisions requiring nondiscrimination in public engagement. The MPO's public participation process will also be used as Brockton Area Transit Authority's (BAT) public participation process and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) public participation process.

The TIP can be amended with the requirement that the proposed changes undergo a twenty-one (21) day public review period, and the changes are formally endorsed by the MPO (the Old Colony MPO, at their discretion, may vote to abbreviate the public comment period under what they consider extraordinary circumstances beyond the MPO's control). Changes to the TIP must undergo a public process consistent with the goals, guiding principles, and techniques of the PPP, and particulars (how and when TIP documents are amended or adjusted, comment period length, amendment definitions, etc.) are detailed in the TIP document.

Corridor and Area Plans

MPO staff also prepares corridor and area planning studies, as identified in the UPWP, to identify transportation issues and develop potential solutions. The studies identify the transportation issues by closely examining the existing and expected future conditions within each study area. Elements evaluated include the design of the existing transportation facilities, transit services available, accommodation of non-motorized modes of transportation, traffic volumes, levels of congestion, and potentially unsafe conditions.

Recommendations developed from these studies are assigned to one of two groups based on a

number of factors including overall cost and expected impacts. The projects with relatively low costs and few impacts are generally more short-term, with an expected implementation time frame of 5 to 10 years. The projects with a relatively high construction cost and more impacts are generally more long-term, with an expected implementation time frame of more than 10 years. These studies help to inform the MPO in its transportation decision-making role for the region.

FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION

ISTEA - 1991

The 1991 federal legislation known as the **Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)** required States and MPOs to significantly expand opportunities for the public to become involved in the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes. The Final Rule on Statewide Planning and Metropolitan Planning for ISTEA states: "The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs."

In addition, the Rule states that any modification to this public participation program requires a comment period of not less than 45 days. A public comment period must be provided prior to the approval or revision of any plan. In addition, MPOs must seek out and consider the needs of those individuals and groups that have been traditionally underserved by transportation systems.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations must establish and periodically review and update public involvement processes. The process should assure early and continued public awareness of, and access to, the transportation decision-making process.

TEA-21 - 1998

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) enacted in 1998 reaffirms the requirement for public involvement opportunities and additionally requires that:

"Before approving a long-range transportation plan [or the annual TIP], each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the long-range transportation plan [or the TIP]."

SAFETEA-LU – August 10, 2005

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway

safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009. An extension of the funding for SAFETEA-LU through September 30, 2010, was provided by the HIRE (Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment) Act on March 18, 2010. In March 2010, Congress extended the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) through the end of fiscal-year 2011, freezing funding at 2010 levels for transit and other programs through September 30, 2011, and extended again to March 2012.

MAP-21 - July 6, 2012

MAP-21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141), was signed into law on July 6, 2012. Notable changes included a performance-based planning process. The SAFETEA-LU Act required the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will serve to advance eight (8) transportation planning factors. These factors were unchanged with the passage of MAP-21 and are as follows:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system management and operation; and
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

FAST ACT – December 4, 2015

On December 4, 2015, the **Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act** (Pub. L. No. 114-94) was signed into law. The law provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act maintains our focus on safety, keeps intact the established structure of the various highway-related programs we manage, continues efforts to streamline project delivery and, for the first time, provides a dedicated source of federal dollars for freight projects. With the enactment of the FAST Act, states and local governments are now moving forward with critical transportation projects with the confidence that they will have a federal partner over the long term. The FAST Act has been extended via a Continuing Resolution for the 2021 fiscal year and is set to expire in September of 2021.

OLD COLONY MPO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS

The MPO has the following public participation goals that agency representatives, entities using our Public Participation Plan for their public participation processes, and those working in concert with the Old Colony MPO on transportation projects and initiatives should strive to achieve:

1. Obtain Quality Input and Participation
 - Comments received by the Old Colony MPO are to be encouraged and reviewed to the extent they can be useful, relevant, and constructive, and contribute to better plans, projects, programs, and decisions.
2. Establish Consistent Commitment
 - The Old Colony MPO strives to communicate regularly and develop trust with communities, while helping build community capacity to provide public input, as needed.
3. Increase Diversity
 - Participants who are encouraged to participate in public engagement processes should represent, as appropriate to a project or those impacted, a range of socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural perspectives and include people from low-income and minority neighborhoods, people with limited English proficiency, and other traditionally underserved people.
4. Ensure Accessibility
 - Every effort should be made to ensure that participation opportunities are physically, geographically, temporally, linguistically, and culturally accessible.
5. Provide Relevance
 - Issues are framed clearly and simply such that the significance and potential effect may be understood by the greatest number of participants.
6. Foster Participant Satisfaction
 - The Old Colony MPO should encourage the public to participate in project and initiative related discussions, recognizing that people who take the time to participate feel it is worth the effort to join the discussion and provide feedback.
7. Clearly Define Potential for Influence
 - The process clearly identifies and communicates where and how participants can have influence and direct impact on decision making.
8. Establish and Maintain Partnerships
 - The Old Colony MPO develops and maintains partnerships with communities and community-based organizations through the activities described in the PPP.
9. Provide Opportunities to Build Consensus
 - The Old Colony MPO should ensure that discussions, particularly where there are

conflicting views, are structured to allow for levels of compromise and consensus that will satisfy the greatest number of community concerns and objectives. The Old Colony MPO recognizes that processes which allow for consensus to be achieved are critical to enable public support for recommended actions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT THE OLD COLONY MPO

The Old Colony MPO recognizes the following principles in achieving its goals for public participation:

1. Promote Respect
 - All transportation constituents and the views they promote should be respected. All feedback received should be given careful and respectful consideration. Members of the public should have opportunities to debate issues, frame alternative solutions, and affect final decisions.
2. Provide Proactive and Timely Opportunities for Involvement
 - Avenues for involvement should be open, meaningful, and organized to let people participate comfortably, taking into consideration accessibility, language, scheduling, location and the format of informational materials. Meetings should be structured to allow informed, constructive dialogue, be promoted broadly and affirmatively; and be clearly defined in the early stages of plan or project development. Participation activities should allow for early involvement and be ongoing and proactive, so participants can have a fair opportunity to influence the MPO decisions. Participation should be made easy by incorporating virtual public participation at every meeting or as standalone meetings as part of a project's public participation programming. Opportunities for comment both during a standard comment period as well as after significant changes will be provided. Virtual and hybrid public meetings should be recorded, and those recordings reviewed for public input.
3. Offer Authentic and Meaningful Participation
 - The Old Colony MPO should support public participation as a dynamic and meaningful activity that requires teamwork and commitment at all levels. Public processes should provide participants with purposeful involvement, allowing useful feedback and guidance.
 - Participants should be encouraged to understand and speak with awareness of the many competing interests, issues, and needs that lead to transportation ideas and projects.
4. Provide a Clear, Focused, and Predictable Process
 - The participation process should be understandable and known well in advance. This clarity should be structured to allow members of the public and officials to plan their time and use their resources to provide input effectively. Activities should have a clear purpose, the intended use of input received made clear, and all explanations described in language that is easy to understand.

5. Foster Diversity and Inclusiveness

- The Old Colony MPO should proactively reach out to and engage people with disabilities, as well as low-income, minority, limited English proficient community members and other traditionally underserved populations.

6. Be Responsive to Participants

- The Old Colony MPO meetings should facilitate discussion that address participant's interests and concerns. Scheduling should be designed to meet the greatest number of participants possible and be considerate of their schedules and availability. Virtual meeting platforms should be used to garner greater participation, especially for those that might not be able to participate in person. Informational materials provided should be clear, concise and responsive to known community concerns, while avoiding misleading or biased suggestions or solutions.

7. Record, Share and Respond to Public Comments

- Public comments, written and verbal, should be given consideration in the MPO decision making processes and reported in relevant documents. Virtual and Hybrid meeting recordings should be reviewed to gain a greater understanding of public comments and for possible public comment oversight. Specifically, public comments provide an opportunity for shared knowledge among the Old Colony MPO departments and transportation partners, but also require clear responses that are documented to demonstrate that community input was in fact addressed. The Old Colony MPO should communicate the impact of the public input on decisions at a broad summary level, describing the major themes, the decisions reached, and the rationales for the decisions.

8. Self-evaluation and Plan Modification

- The effectiveness of this Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs of the public and will be revised to include new strategies and approaches. Plan review will include performance indicators from the Measure of Effectiveness (MOE) report to gauge Public Participation Plan success.

The OCPC Reflection, Opportunity, and Action (ROA) Task Force

In 2020, OCPC created a Reflection, Opportunity, and Action (ROA) Task Force to ensure and strengthen its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The mission of the task force is to reflect upon and strengthen its organizational values in its work and policies and find opportunities for improvement. OCPC recognizes the positive intrinsic relationship between these values of diversity, equity, and inclusion and thriving communities, and strives to be a partner and asset to the communities in the region in the planning and decision-making process, where all members of the community have input, feel valued, and receive benefit from the planning process.

The task force set a number of goals including:

1. Continuous review of public participation methods to ensure traditionally underserved populations and organizations are heard.
2. Proactive engagement of stakeholders, identifying diverse organizations and people for participation and involvement in the decision-making processes.
3. Intentional development of opportunities for inclusion providing a platform for under-represented communities to be heard.
4. Foster participation internally empowering staff to share ideas, concerns, and thoughts.
5. Create opportunities around themes of inclusive public participation, community empowerment, and cultural competency.

Old Colony MPO Approach to Public Participation

Transportation decision making and project development processes follow set procedures, including the need to give the public opportunities to participate. These public involvement objectives are further shaped by the Old Colony MPO's commitment to civil rights related obligations, such as removal of barriers to participation, diversity, and inclusive outreach. This Public Participation Plan describes participation opportunities generally and includes specific protocols and resources that are designed to facilitate diverse and inclusive public outreach and involvement. The plan is a flexible and an evolving document. As necessary, the MPO will revise the PPP based on recurring assessments of successes and/or challenges associated with outreach, as well as suggestions made and the results of public engagement processes. Also, the PPP and outreach will be reviewed using performance indicators found in the Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) Report to help guide changes to the PPP to help improve public participation.

In this section, a general description of the Old Colony MPO's public participation activities are presented. The next section contains the specific civil rights protocols utilized by the MPO for all public outreach activities, categorized by types of communication formats, including large group discussions targeted group engagement and one-on-one interactions. The next chapter also contains the MPO Accessible Meeting Policy. The view is that if these objectives and standards are consistently applied to the different types of public meetings the MPO convenes or participates in, the resulting discussions and resolution of issues will be inclusive and accessible to all.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

The Old Colony MPO takes pride in its work to maintain a collaborative relationship with community and municipal stakeholders and has strategically developed this Public Participation Plan to foster collaboration in an all-inclusive manner. The Old Colony MPO public outreach effort rests on utilizing multiple communication channels to distribute information to and solicit input from affected constituencies. The Old Colony MPO typically communicates with the general public through one or more of the following methods:

- The [Old Colony MPO](#) section of the Old Colony Planning Council website,
- Public Media (including English and non-English newspapers, radio stations, and television stations)
- Press releases
- Posters, display boards, and flyers
- Project fact sheets
- Brochures
- Electronic Newsletters via email
- Public service announcements
- Public comment period on draft documents
- Mailing and email distribution lists

- Information stands at local events (Chambers of Commerce, Minority Business Groups)
- Social media, such as Twitter (https://twitter.com/OCPC_Planning) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/oldcolonyplanningcouncil/>)
- Legislative briefings
- Presentations, public meetings, public hearings, open houses, and workshops
- Civic advisory committees, working groups, community social clubs and events such as Cape Verdean Society

Public Comment on Draft Documents

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Public Participation Plan (PPP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) prepared for the Old Colony MPO are presented to the Old Colony MPO as draft and released by vote for public comment periods. At this time, the Old Colony Planning Council Staff announces the public comment period and distributes the draft document(s) for public review and comment(s). Comments received by staff are documented, presented to the Old Colony MPO, and may cause changes to the document. After the public comment period, the Old Colony MPO can endorse, reject, or re-release the draft document for an additional comment period by vote. An additional opportunity for public comment will be provided if the final LRTP, PPP, or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts. The comment period for the documents may be abbreviated as determined by the Old Colony MPO. The public comment periods for these plans and programs are as follows:

- 21 days for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and any amendments to the aforementioned plans and programs.
- 21 days for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and any amendments to the aforementioned plans and programs.
- 21 days for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and any amendments to the aforementioned plans and programs.
- 45 days for the Public Participation Plan (PPP) and any amendments to the aforementioned plan.

A minimum public comment period of 21 days has been established for the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, and their respective Amendments, however, the Old Colony MPO at their discretion, may vote to abbreviate the public comment period under what they consider extraordinary circumstances beyond the MPO's control.

Old Colony MPO Interested Parties

The Old Colony MPO seeks to define a process in this plan that ensures that affected stakeholders are included in the process, including community members, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of

freight transportations services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of individuals with disabilities, and other interested parties have reasonable opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process.

In order to better understand how the MPO is meeting its commitment to fostering public engagement in all MPO planning activities, it is important to have a series of measurements to better understand the effectiveness of the public outreach efforts. It is through the tracking of public engagements, whether in person, via email, through social media or through utilizing virtual public engagement that the MPO can discern if its public outreach efforts are delivering the desired results. The results of these public outreach efforts can be viewed in the Measurements of Effectiveness (MOE) Report.

The Old Colony MPO tracks the outreach efforts it conducts. Public meeting attendance is recorded with additional attention given to attendees that are from Title VI protected classes. The MPO tracks the methods it employs in getting information to the public on upcoming meetings, the release of public documents, and the viewing and engagement of the public through its social media presence. Through the collection and analysis of this information, the MPO gains greater clarity on what it is doing well and whether there might need to increase public engagement among specific stakeholders or modify its process. The Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) used to evaluate outreach efforts typically include:

- Meeting attendance
- The number of or estimated number of LEP/ Title VI protected class encounters
- Number of documents translated into the four LEP safe harbor clause languages
- Number of direct engagements with outside organizations
- Number of correspondences (This includes the number of instances individuals responded through social media, surveys and questionnaires, direct mailings, email, and at public workshop, through written, verbal, or other communication)

More specially, the following are examples of measures that will be reviewed, adapted, and potentially considered for inclusion in the Measures of Effectiveness Report.

Outreach Measures

- Number and type of events / meetings held
- Number of announcements and documents distributed to the public
 - Plans, Programs, Press Releases, Emails, Flyers, Letters, Newsletters, Social Media. Website. etc.

Participation Measures

- Number (and Percentage) of Signatories at MPO Meetings
- Number (and Percentage) of JTC Representatives at JTC Meetings
- Number of participants at each event/ meeting
- Number of organizations represented at each event/ meeting
- Presence of public officials at each event/ meeting

- Meeting and events accessible to people with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency
- Accessibility accommodations and language services provided free of charge, upon request, as available

Response Measures

- Number of public comments received
 - Number of positive and / or negative comments
 - Mode of receipt (social media, email, etc.)
- Number of website hits
- Average response time to inquiries

The Old Colony MPO Website

Many people use the Internet as their main source of data and information. The transportation section of the Old Colony Planning Council website is a resource for people wanting information about the Old Colony MPO programs, projects, and activities. Public notices of all the MPO meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods are posted on this site, along with information about the Old Colony MPO programs, projects, and activities. Some programs and projects have dedicated webpages that include:

- Information about upcoming meetings
- Project presentations and fact sheets
- Summary notes for meetings/workshops on the project
- Process to be added to the project’s electronic distribution list

Project websites are important tools for people who cannot attend meetings. Members of the public can review presentations, virtual meeting recordings, meeting summaries and provide comments through emails and letters to the Old Colony MPO staff. People who cannot attend meetings may also review information on the website and submit comments to the Old Colony MPO via email, FAX, phone, and/ or mail.

Meeting Notice Content and Distribution

The Old Colony MPO announces all in person and virtual meetings, public hearings, open houses, workshops, and public comment periods through press releases, email, electronic newsletter, mailings, and/or the distribution of informational meeting flyers as well as placing meeting information on the Old Colony MPO website and posting on the Old Colony Planning Council bulletin board as may be required by the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. Notices are published in local English newspapers, and if the project has an impact on low income or minority populations, an effort is made to place notices in media that serves local, minority and non-English speaking communities in regions across the Old Colony Region. Meeting notices will include information about getting to a meeting location using public transportation when transit is available and provide links to participate virtually. The Old Colony MPO notices also let

people know they can request foreign language assistance, and that sign-language interpreters and other accommodations are available on request for people with disabilities (with timely notification, such as a week in advance).

There is also information that advises people whom to contact with questions or concerns. The information for these meetings and the informational materials provided at the meetings can be translated into languages other than English, in accordance with Old Colony MPO's Language Access Plan.

Public Meetings, Virtual Public Meetings, Open Houses, Public Hearings, and Workshops

Public Meetings

Public meetings are held to present information to or about the Old Colony MPO and provide the public an opportunity for input from community residents. Meetings provide a time and place for face-to-face contact and two-way communication. To provide an additional communication avenue at the meeting, participants may provide comments in writing via comment cards.

They are tailored to specific issues or community groups and can be either informal or formal. Public meetings are used to disseminate information, provide a setting for public discussion, and receive feedback from the community.

Old Colony Planning MPO places the highest value on the safety and well-being of the citizens of its communities. During the Coronavirus Pandemic State of Emergency, measures were taken to ensure that the MPO work continued while abiding by the guidelines set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Public meetings were held remotely and access to those remote meetings was open to the public with meeting credentials and included on the agenda for interested stakeholders to tune in and participate. The public comment section was included on the agenda for all JTC and MPO meetings held remotely.

Open Houses

Open houses are informal settings where people can obtain information about a plan, program, or project. They do not have formal agendas, and no formal discussions or presentations take place. At open houses, people receive information informally from exhibits and staff, and they are encouraged to give opinions, make comments, and state preferences to staff, orally or in writing. Informal presentations, slide shows, and one-on-one discussions take place continuously throughout the event, which usually includes a series of stations: a reception area; a presentation area for slide shows or short talks; areas for one-on-one discussions between community people and agency staff members; and displays of background information, activities to date, workflow, and anticipated next steps, accompanied by an array of primary subject panels. Since there is no fixed agenda, open houses are usually scheduled for substantial portions of a day or evening, so that people can drop in at their convenience and fully participate.

Note that Open Houses often involve one-on-one discussion of issues or concerns between meeting participants and Old Colony MPO representatives. The content and nature of these informal exchanges is not easily captured in documents such as meeting summaries or notes. Thus, Old Colony MPO representatives that have such an exchange are instructed to relay the content to both the Old Colony MPO and the Old Colony Title VI Coordinator so that these issues are catalogued and tracked, as needed.

Public Hearings

A public hearing is more formal than a public meeting. The public hearing is an opportunity for members of the public to make recorded statements of their views immediately before project decision making. A public hearing is held prior to a decision point, to gather community comments and hear the positions of all interested parties for the public record and input into decisions. Public hearings are required by the federal government for many transportation projects and have specific legal requirements.

The Old Colony MPO views the hearing as a specific, observable administrative benchmark for public involvement, and will utilize the MassDOT Public Design Hearings for TIP Projects to satisfy this requirement.

Virtual and Hybrid Public Meetings

Virtual public meetings are held to present information just as with in person public meetings but are conducted using an online video conferencing platform. Virtual public meetings provide an opportunity for community residents and stakeholders that might not be able to participate in person to provide the Old Colony MPO valuable input on a project or initiative.

Hybrid public meetings are held to present information just as with in person public meetings but are conducted using an online video conferencing platform allowing remote attendance combined with in-person attendees following safety protocols, and viewing and participating via online video conferencing platforms.

Meeting Facilities and Accessibility

The Old Colony MPO is required to hold meetings, open houses, and workshops in accessible facilities that are, wherever possible, at locations close to or served by fixed route transit service. For facilities not located on fixed route transit service, potential participants should be made aware of the door-to-door paratransit service offered by BAT (DIAL-A-BAT) and GATRA (Dial-A-Ride). For this door-to-door paratransit service, certain eligibility criteria apply. Potential Participants should also be made aware of virtual participation opportunities.

Who is Eligible for BAT DIAL-A-BAT?

- Anyone, regardless of age, who by reason of physical or developmental disability is unable to ride a regular bat bus.
- Anyone 65 years or older.

For more information, please visit <http://www.ridebat.com/dial-a-bat/> or call BAT at 508-638-5920.

Who is Eligible for GATRA Dial-A-Ride?

- A person with a disability that limits one major life function who cannot, because of a disability, use public transportation.
- A person with a disability who, because of certain conditions, is not able to use public fixed-route transportation.
- A person 60 years of age or older.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.gatra.org/index.php/special-services/dial-a-ride/>. or call GATRA Dial-A-Ride at 508-222-6106.

Meeting planners must conduct an analysis of the demographics of the area where the meeting is to be held to determine whether notices should be translated into languages other than English. The availability of handout materials in alternate formats, as well as other accommodations (language interpreters, sign language interpreters, CART translators, etc.) must be indicated in the meeting notices along with specific information on how to request these accommodations.

Old Colony MPO meeting planners should research and make every effort to select the location, size, and setup of meeting facilities based on the specific characteristics of the audience and the type of information to be presented. Whenever possible, hearings, meetings, open houses, and workshops should be held in places that are centrally located to the project and likely to attract a cross section of the people and businesses representative of the community stakeholders.

Local government buildings, public libraries, public schools, and community centers are often used.

The Old Colony MPO meeting staff members that are charged with the coordination of any meeting are responsible for coordinating resources, including free accessibility assistance and language assistance as outlined in this plan, to ensure that the event is accessible to all people and to provide the greatest opportunity for participation by interested parties. Consideration for wheelchair requirements, as well as individuals with hearing and vision disabilities, are taken into consideration in Old Colony MPO meeting and event planning, in conformance with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rules and Regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. Virtual public meetings are another tool that should be used to garner greater public participation. Using a virtual meeting platform would lower the barrier to participation especially for projects that are in public transit inaccessible locations.

Tailoring Outreach to Underserved People

Along with scheduling a room, posting notices and ensuring accommodations are in place for a

meeting to be well attended; meeting planners are also obligated to conduct outreach to encourage attendance, and to include those groups protected by anti-discrimination laws.

Many people in minority and low-income communities, as well as those with low literacy and/or limited English proficiency, have traditionally been underserved by conventional outreach methods. Outreach to traditionally underserved groups helps ensure that all constituents have opportunities to affect the decision-making process. It sets the tone for subsequent project activities and promotes a spirit of inclusion. The greater the consensus among all community members, the more likely the position agreed upon will aid in decision making for the plan, program, or project. Inclusive outreach efforts are particularly useful because they:

- Provide fresh perspectives to project planners and developers
- Give the Old Colony MPO firsthand information about community specific issues and concerns
- Allow the Old Colony MPO to understand potential controversies
- Provide feedback to the Old Colony MPO on how to get these communities involved
- Ensure that the solutions ultimately selected will be those that best meet all of the communities' needs

By interacting with community members, the Old Colony MPO staff will gain insight into the reasons why community members agree or disagree with proposed plans or projects. The perspective of traditionally underserved people can inform the goals and outcomes of planning and project development. Such individuals can suggest fresh approaches to transportation issues that otherwise might not be raised. The Old Colony MPO's public outreach efforts are designed to accommodate the needs of low-income, minority, Limited English Proficiency, and other traditionally underserved people throughout all phases of any public participation process.

Traditional techniques may not be the most effective. It is important to use a variety of public involvement techniques when working with underserved populations and communicating with community leaders to find out the best techniques for working with a particular group (e.g., which approaches to use, where and when to hold events, how to recruit people, and what to avoid doing).

Title VI and ADA Protocols, Policies, and Resources

The civil rights protocols set forth in this document are a baseline for holding inclusive, accessible and responsive public meetings and hearings.

The Old Colony MPO conducts and participates in many meetings and hearings within the course of their operations. These Protocols are designed to support the basic form and structure of existing operations.

These protocols include steps and strategies to implement prior to holding a public meeting or other such activity during the course of the public process.

Meetings should be tailored to the special needs of the community, and/or the target audience and subject matter to be addressed. Effective public participation from a civil rights perspective includes awareness of the local population (demographics) or individuals to be engaged, including languages spoken, represented cultural groups, community organizations and leaders and key players. Equally critical to an effective meeting are well communicated (effectively circulated across types of media, and translated when needed) and timely notice, early response and coordination on requests for language assistance for limited English proficient individuals or reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities.

Federal nondiscrimination obligations, through Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) include the categories of race, color, national origin (including LEP), age, sex, and disability. These protocols are designed to ensure that sufficient consideration of outreach to and inclusion of these groups is incorporated into the Old Colony MPO's public engagement procedures. These protocols will also sufficiently address State-level nondiscrimination obligations. State level protections include the federal protections plus ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, veteran's status (including Vietnam-era veterans), and background.

CIVIL RIGHTS PROTOCOLS BY TYPE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The following represent the four types of public engagement most commonly encountered by the Old Colony MPO employees:

- Meetings for the general public
- Targeted outreach gatherings
- Open houses
- One-to-one interactions

An introduction to each of these four types of public engagement is provided below. Familiarity with the following descriptions will help inform the user on how they should navigate the protocols set forth in this document.

Meetings for the General Public

Public meetings and hearings, both at the project level and more broadly, are an opportunity for members of the public to engage in the transportation decision making process. The civil rights considerations described in this section are designed to inform and guide all the Old Colony MPO staff involved in planning and conducting such events. Incorporation of these processes and utilization of these resources when planning or participating in public meetings/hearings will help ensure that these events are Title VI compliant.

Open Houses

At times, Old Colony MPO staff may interact with members of the public through “open house” sessions prior to meetings/hearings. These sessions afford members of the public an opportunity to view design plans for projects that will be discussed at the formal public outreach event.

The Old Colony MPO staff is on hand to discuss particular details of interest with members of the public. While the interactions during these sessions are informal, critical issues are often raised. The Old Colony MPO staff strives to address these issues accurately and effectively during these sessions.

Targeted Outreach Gatherings

At times, the complexity of a project, controversial issues, or the reality of having multiple large Title VI groups to address may require engaging targeted audiences of stakeholders. Similarly, the Old Colony MPO may at times convene selected people within advisory committees, research efforts, and/ or focus groups. The general work of understanding the demographics of people in a locality or project area still apply to determine what Title VI groups are impacted by an initiative, as described above. However, there may also be a need to include strong and possibly visible community leaders within Title VI populations; this can require more subtle and challenging efforts to secure their participation and needed contribution to discussions or deliberations. OCPC should use those resources developed by the Reflection, Opportunity, and Action (ROA) Task Force to help in this effort.

One-to-One Interactions

The Old Colony MPO staff members interact directly with the public by virtue of the public facing programs, services, and activities the organization provides. These interactions can include planned meetings, such as those with property and business owners directly impacted by transportation projects, and spontaneous interactions with members of the public. These interactions, whether in person, over the phone, or electronic, present civil rights related risk factors that can be mitigated through the strategies articulated herein.

MEETINGS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Preliminary/ Ongoing Considerations

1. Identify the population and composition of the individuals/ communities impacted by the Old Colony MPO program, service, or activity by considering the following:
 - a. Project parameters, such as location, areas that will be impacted by construction phases, areas that may benefit from the completed project, and the areas that may be burdened by the completed project
 - b. The nature of the program, service, or activity (is it connected to the project development process? is it statewide, regional or local?)

2. Determine the Title VI features of the community to be engaged by reference to the Old Colony MPO's Title VI maps, which include the limited English proficient (LEP) and minority populations across the Region. Appendix A for reference:
 - a. Limited English Proficiency: Individuals Who Speak English and Speak English Less than Very Well
 - b. Limited English Proficiency: Individuals Who Speak Spanish and Speak English Less than Very Well
 - c. Limited English Proficiency: Individuals Who Speak Haitian Creole and Speak English Less than Very Well
 - d. Limited English Proficiency: Individuals Who Speak Portuguese or Portuguese Creole and Speak English Less than Very Well
 - e. Percent Minority by Census Block
 - f. Environmental Justice Populations

Additionally, the following maps and resources should be consulted:

- a. US Census Bureau Language
 - i. Explore Census Data Portal
[https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Language Spoken at Home&g=7950000US2504000&tid=ACSDT5Y2019.B16001&hidePreview=fa](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Language%20Spoken%20at%20Home&g=7950000US2504000&tid=ACSDT5Y2019.B16001&hidePreview=fa)
[lse](#)
 - b. MassDOT "Engage" - Outreach and Engagement
 - i. Tool
<http://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/maptemplate/engage>
-
3. Identify key Title VI-related and other community based organizations and community leaders. It may be helpful to utilize well established connections with individuals and groups. These instructions provide the steps to identify previously unknown points of contact to diversify outreach:
 - a. Utilize the Old Colony MPO's expanded contacts list that includes social service, health care, and other community based organizations that may have connections with traditionally underserved populations.

Meeting Location and Time

1. Title VI Considerations

- a. Consult with community leaders and community-based organizations that have identified any aspects of the community which may be central in determining the time and location of the public engagement activity. Doing so informs the cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, and political histories/experiences of the demographic groups in the locale which better inform meeting planning.
- b. Consider factors such as cultural sensitivities and/or professional and academic commitments in setting the number of meetings. Multiple meetings may be held at various locations and times if doing so promotes meaningful access to the public engagement opportunity.
- c. Where possible, select a meeting location near public transportation options. For meeting locations not located on fixed route transit service, potential participants should be made aware of the door-to-door paratransit service offered by BAT and GATRA. For this door-to-door paratransit service, certain eligibility criteria apply.
- d. Host a virtual public meeting to provide additional opportunities for individuals to participate when they cannot make it to an in-person meeting.

2. ADA Considerations

- a. Identify a venue for the public meeting that is ADA compliant and accessible to people with disabilities.
 - i. The Old Colony MPO will maintain an Accessible Facilities Database that contains updated information regarding venues that have been previously assessed for ADA compliance.
- b. If an appropriate venue cannot be identified in the database, the following resources can identify public meeting venues that may be accessible:
 - i. The Massachusetts Office on Disability
<http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/>
 - ii. The Disability Commissions
<http://www.mass.gov/anf/docs/mod/commission-listing.doc>
 - iii. The Independent Living Centers
<http://www.masilc.org/membership/cils>
- c. Take the opportunity afforded by early communication with venue staff and the public to identify pre-existing accessibility accommodations, including sight impairment and the need for assistive listening devices and Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) equipment.
- d. For the full treatment regarding ADA obligations in the public outreach context, consult the Old Colony MPO Accessible Meeting Policy which is available beginning on Page 43. The policy enumerates the ADA obligations in the public meeting context and provides a checklist for holding an ADA accessible public meeting.

- e. Host a virtual public meeting to provide additional opportunities for individuals to participate when they cannot make it to an in-person meeting or no accessible meeting venues are available.

Coordinating Public Notice

1. Draft the public meeting notice document, either utilizing existing approved templates or creating a new one, ensuring that the following civil rights related components are included:
 - a. Notice of Nondiscrimination
 - b. Availability of language services and reasonable accommodations
 - c. Contact information and procedures for requesting the above services or services to accommodate hearing or sight impaired, additional information, or to express a concern
 - d. International Symbol of Accessibility
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Symbol_of_Access
2. Public meeting notices must be accessible, and access to vital documents for hearing and sight impaired made available (Braille available with advanced notice upon request)
3. Address language needs and utilize non-English language outreach resources in the dissemination area if individuals who have limited proficiency in English are present as has been identified by the LEP maps.
 - a. Identify non-English language media (print, TV, radio, online, etc.) and sites with a strong presence of individuals who have limited proficiency in English (transportation facilities, community centers, libraries, commercial/ employment/ educational establishments, places of worship, cultural centers, etc.) that may be effective in communicating notice to individuals who have limited proficiency in English. The following resources may be consulted:
 - i. The MassDOT Office of Civil Rights
<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights.aspx>
 - ii. MassDOT Community Relations
 - iii. Community Leaders
 - iv. Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT)
<http://www.ridebat.com>
 - v. Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)
<http://www.gatra.org/>
 - vi. Public Libraries
<http://www.publiclibraries.com/massachusetts.htm>
 - vii. Schools/Universities
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_colleges_and_universities_in_Massachusetts
 - viii. Chambers of Commerce
<http://masshome.com/cofc.html>
 - ix. Local Legislators

<https://malegislature.gov/Legislators>

- b. Develop translated version(s) of the notices, related announcements, and summaries of vital transportation documents (LRTP, PPP, TIP, and UPWP) as needed, based on the extent of LEP need and available media sources. If there is a large population of individuals who are LEP in the meeting or project locale, consider translating the meeting notice in full. If LEP needs have not been readily identified, include the single line of text into the languages other than English. Appropriate translation accommodations could include:
 - i. Full translation of the notice into the languages indicated
 - ii. The inclusion of the following statement translated into the appropriate languages into the English language version of the notice:

“This notice describes the date, time, and location of a public meeting or hearing on a transportation project in this area. If you need this notice translated, contact the Old Colony MPO’s Title VI Coordinator at 508-583-1833.”
 - iii. Translated versions of print, TV, radio, and online announcements related to the meeting, as applicable.
- c. Consult the following resources for translation needs:
 - i. UMass Translation Center
 1. Request Procedure:
<http://www.umasstranslation.com/services/request-an-estimate/>
 2. Rates:
<http://www.umasstranslation.com/services/rates/>
 - ii. Statewide Language Services Contract:
 1. Search COMMBUYS website <https://www.commbuys.com/bs/> for contract “PRF63” under Contract/ Blanket Description.
 - iii. Local Interpretation Services
4. The final dissemination of a public notice should incorporate the following:
 - a. The dissemination of public notice has occurred sufficiently in advance of meeting to ensure adequate processing time for language and accessibility accommodation requests.
 - b. The public notice/ announcement materials have been delivered to non-English language outreach resources and sites, as need is identified in the language access plan’s four factor analysis.
 - c. The public notice has been delivered directly to individuals, organizations, and other stakeholders that represent Title VI populations in the region. Notice may be sent to the entities below with the request that they forward the notice among their own distribution lists and/ or post it.
 - i. The MassDOT Office of Civil Rights
<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights.aspx>

- ii. MassDOT Community Relations
- iii. Community Leaders
- iv. Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT)
<http://www.ridebat.com>
- v. Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)
<http://www.gatra.org/>
- vi. Public Libraries
<http://www.publiclibraries.com/massachusetts.htm>
- vii. Schools/Universities
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_colleges_and_universities_in_Massachusetts
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_colleges_and_universities_in_Massachusetts
- viii. Chambers of Commerce
<http://masshome.com/cofc.html>
- ix. Local Legislators
<https://malegislature.gov/Legislators>

Preparation for the Meeting

1. It is important to consider the following questions:
 - a. Are there civil rights implications in the background/history of the project;
 - b. What public involvement has already been accomplished and did it illuminate civil rights concerns;
 - c. What are the known benefits and burdens of the Old Colony MPO program, service, or activity on Title VI populations? Consult the following resources:
 - i. Public meeting/ hearing transcripts
 - ii. Written public comments
 - iii. Old Colony MPO staff involved in planning and/or conducting prior related meetings
 - iv. Public Meeting demographic surveys
2. Meeting planners should maintain an ongoing dialogue with the individuals and organizations in order to remain well informed on the level of community interest and likely involvement in the public outreach event.
3. The subject matter of transportation-related public engagement can often be based on highly technical studies, project designs that address difficult engineering requirements, multi-faceted long-range plans, and other complex documents. In such instances, project managers and meeting planners should create summary documents to present complex information in as simple and clear manner as possible to members of the public who have widely varying backgrounds, including varied education levels.
4. Similarly to #3 above, any spoken presentation of complex topics should be as simple as possible to effectively communicate the subject matter across the varying background of meeting attendees. The guidance document below describes good strategies for presenting technical information to nontechnical audiences <http://www.cedma->

[europe.org/newsletter%20articles/WorkplaceXpert/Presenting%20Technical%20Information%20to%20Nontechnical%20Audiences%20\(Aug%2008\).pdf](http://europe.org/newsletter%20articles/WorkplaceXpert/Presenting%20Technical%20Information%20to%20Nontechnical%20Audiences%20(Aug%2008).pdf) .

5. Ensure that electronic documents related to the subject of the public meeting and intended for public dissemination and review are accessible, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Adobe Acrobat Professional and Microsoft Word have built-in “accessibility checkers.” (Braille will be made available for sight impaired upon advanced request.) The following provides instruction on developing accessible documents:
 - a. Best practices for text and color contrast considerations when preparing hardcopy and electronic visual aids (such as maps, posters, plans, PowerPoint templates/graphics, charts, graphs, etc.) refer to Lighthouse International <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/student-access//accessibility/>
 - b. Creating accessible Word documents: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/creating-accessible-word-documents-HA101999993.aspx>
 - c. Creating accessible Excel workbooks: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel-help/creating-accessible-excel-workbooks-HA102013545.aspx?CTT=3>
 - d. Creating accessible PowerPoint presentations: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/creating-accessible-powerpoint-presentations-HA102013555.aspx?CTT=3>
 - e. Creating accessible PDFs with Microsoft Office products through “Tagging”:_ <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel-help/create-accessible-pdfs-HA102478227.aspx?CTT=3>
 - f. General information on accessibility from Adobe: <http://www.adobe.com/accessibility/>
 - g. Adobe Acrobat X Accessibility Guide: <http://www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/accessibility/products/acrobat/pdfs/acrobat-x-accessible-pdf-from-word.pdf>
6. The period between notice dissemination and the meeting date should be used to identify and arrange accommodations and produce meeting materials in alternate languages and formats (such as large-print), if requested.
 - a. Alternate formats can be obtained by contacting:
 - i. Old Colony Title VI Coordinator Mary Waldron at 508-583-1833 Extension 202 or information@ocpcrpa.org.
 - b. The nature and extent of accommodations that may be needed can be identified by:
 - i. Direct requests
 - ii. Feedback from community leaders, stakeholders, advocacy groups, etc.
 - iii. The Old Colony MPO Accessible Meeting Checklist (Appendix B)
 - c. Foreign language document translation can be provided by:
 - i. UMass Translation Center
Request Procedure:
Contact Mary Waldron at mwaldron@ocpcrpa.org
 - ii. Statewide Language Services Contract: Search COMMBUYS website

<https://www.commbuys.com/bsol/> for contract “PRF63” under Contract/Blanket Description.

- d. If unsure how to provide a particular accommodation or for guidance on recommended accommodations, consult:
 - i. The MassDOT Office of Civil Rights
<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights.aspx>
 - ii. The Massachusetts Office on Disability
<http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/>
 - iii. The Disability Commissions
(<http://www.mass.gov/anf/docs/mod/commission-listing.doc>)
 - iv. The Independent Living Centers
<http://www.masilc.org/membership/cils>

- e. Funding Considerations
 - i. All accommodations must be provided to the public free of charge.
 - ii. For public outreach events which are necessitated by the project development process, each project contains an administration budget that should be utilized, if available.

Meeting Set-Up

1. ADA considerations in public outreach are fully articulated in the Old Colony MPO Accessible Meeting Policy later in this plan. Meeting setup is addressed in the “Accessibility Checklist for Meeting Planners” as included in Appendix B of this plan which should be used to verify the following:
 - a. If the main entrance to the building is not accessible, is the accessible entrance unlocked?
 - b. Are there integrated seating areas for individuals who use a wheeled mobility device in the meeting room? (Practice Tip: Seating areas for individuals with disabilities should not be segregated from the rest of the audience or limited to just one area.)
 - c. Is there seating available for attendees who are deaf or hard of hearing, and have requested an accommodation, near the front of the meeting room so that attendees may see the interpreter/ captioner, or lip read?
 - d. Is the space allotted to sign language interpreters and/ or the CART screen or monitor clearly visible for hearing impaired individuals?
 - e. Are the aisles at least three feet wide and clear of obstacles or tripping hazards?
 - f. If microphones are used during the public meeting, are adjustable microphone stands available for attendees? Can staff be used as floaters with microphones as an alternative?

- g. If the main entrance to the building is not accessible, is there directional signage towards the accessible entrance?
 - h. Is the accessible entrance unlocked and able to be used independently? If the meeting is taking place at night, is the path leading to the alternate entrance well lit?
 - i. If a stage or platform will be used during the public meeting, is it accessible?
 - j. If a podium will be used during the public meeting, is the podium height adjustable? If not, is there a small table (between 28 and 34 inches in height) provided to the side of the podium?
 - k. Have assistive devices been tested for full functionality immediately prior to the start of the event?
 - l. Is there directional signage for accessible restrooms and/or emergency exits, if applicable?
2. Title VI considerations can be addressed through the following:
- a. Based on identified language needs, has signage in other languages been posted?
 - b. Is the space allotted to foreign language interpreters clearly visible to the entire audience?
 - c. Has space been given to foreign language interpreters to sit with individuals who need language assistance?
 - d. Have Title VI related materials been made available at the welcome desk and/or in the meeting packet? This should include:
 - i. "I speak" language cards <http://www.lep.gov/ISpeakCards2004.pdf>
 - ii. Translated versions of the written comment form, as applicable
 - iii. Demographics survey

During the Meeting

1. At the official start of the meeting, make the following statements. If a foreign language translator(s) is present, instruct them to repeat. Read the statement regarding nondiscrimination and availability of language and accessibility accommodations, including assistance in providing written comments.
 - a. Include instructions on site-specific accessibility considerations, such as accessible emergency exits.
2. The Old Colony MPO is required to "demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input" (23 CFR 450.316). During a public outreach event, this requires affording attendees with opportunities to voice comments, questions, and concerns and provide an adequate response at the event or by following up in writing or at subsequent public outreach opportunities.
3. Microphones are in use during the meetings.
4. If meeting is also being held virtual, make sure appropriate technology is setup to receive participants virtually and that there is dedicated staff managing the virtual engagement portion of the meeting.

Post Meeting

1. All public comments (written and oral), testimonials, and sentiments expressed during the public outreach event have been gathered/documentated by Old Colony MPO staff that attended the meeting and passed on to the designee:
2. Once received, the designee catalogues all public comments. Every person who sends a comment to the Old Colony MPO or to Old Colony MPO staff will receive a response indicating that the comment has been received and the comment will be forwarded to the MPO members.
3. The OCPC staff for the MPO is responsible for coordinating responses to public comments because direct impacts require direct communication. 23 CFR 450. 316
 - a. Methods of responses may include:
 - i. Individualized written responses
 - ii. General distribution written statements (web, email, newsletter, newspaper, etc.)
 - iii. Postings to project specific website, if available
 - iv. In-person or telephonic follow-ups with individuals/organizations regarding the topics of discussion at the public outreach event
 - b. The Old Colony MPO staff reviews the public comments to determine which Old Colony MPO program areas should be consulted with or assigned the responsibility of drafting a response that “demonstrate[s] explicit consideration... to public input” (23 CFR 450. 316)
 - c. The Old Colony MPO staff should prepare a summary grid for the Old Colony MPO compiling the list of comments and notation on the responses that are made/proposed to make
 - i. This may be in the form of a table that contains who made the comment, summary of the comment itself, whether there was a change and if not, what was the response.
 - ii. If comments refer to or implicate adverse or disproportionate impacts or limited access to the process by any person protected under Title VI and the non-discrimination statutes, these comments should be forwarded using the Old Colony MPO’s outreach database to solicit further comment on the issue raised. Public Comment should be sought on these comment(s) for a minimum of an additional seven (7) day period by the Old Colony MPO and should be specifically referenced in the summary grid and a response made as required by this section.
4. In instances where the Old Colony MPO will draft a written response to a public comment, the content of the response itself can “demonstrate explicit consideration” by:
 - a. Describing changes to the recommended design prompted/ requested by the comment and how they will be considered
 - b. Describing alternate designs prompted/ requested by the comment and how they will be considered

- c. Describing mitigation measures prompted/ requested by the comment and how they will be considered
 - d. Describing the Old Colony MPO program areas that were consulted in formulating the response
 - e. Noting whether the comment is novel or previously encountered
 - f. Noting whether the comment has been received from a multitude of sources
5. Responses should also contain:
- a. Contact information for additional information and follow-up
 - b. Notice of upcoming related public engagement opportunities
6. If significant changes are made to the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Plan, or the Unified Planning Work Program in response to a public comment, staff may request additional time of the MPO Board to solicit public comment on that significant change.

TARGETED OUTREACH GATHERINGS (SMALL GROUP MEETINGS/ COMMITTEES/ TASK FORCES/ STUDIES/VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENTS)

Strategic Planning for Title VI Group and Individual Inclusion

Strategic planning for the involvement of Title VI community members on special purpose meeting groups or committees is essential to an inclusive and successful effort.

Preliminary Steps:

1. Identify and analyze the location affected by the project or initiative at issue to determine the Title VI populations in the area.
2. Establish a clear objective and role for the envisioned targeted group, including the nature of community involvement and particular skills which may be needed for fruitful discussion or deliberations.
3. Create an outline or public participation matrix to identify the different types of community representation and interests that reflect the community affected by a project or initiative with careful attention to Title VI populations. Types of organizations or interests that may include representatives of Title VI populations:
 - a. transit-dependent community
 - b. affected businesses
 - c. civic organizations (women, seniors, youth, people with disabilities)
 - d. freight interests
 - e. the disability community
 - f. neighborhood association
 - g. schools
 - h. places of worship

Beyond demographic data and identification of the types of Title VI related groups or individuals

in the community, there are certain key questions to help define the individuals or groups to invite. Consider meeting with a small group of internal staff and/ or managers from among Old Colony MPO departments who know the community and who can help answer these key questions:

1. Who can represent these diverse groups and constituencies in a credible and responsible way?
2. Who needs to be at the table for the work to be accomplished?
3. What is the history of relationships between stakeholder representatives and groups? Is there any past tension that may be a deterrent to participation? If so, are there other community leaders who could help mediate to encourage participation despite differences?
4. If known from past experience, are there stakeholders critical to the process who may be reluctant to participate? How can this reluctance be alleviated? What would be the impact of their refusal to participate in the process? Is there an alternative to their participation?
5. What commitments do you want from participants?
6. Other than known stakeholders, what other individuals or groups could have an interest in the project that are not in the immediate project area, and/ or are not otherwise represented in the outreach strategy?
7. Do any necessary parties have possible concerns about participating? How can those concerns be alleviated?

Consult Statewide Resources

State resources include the following:

1. Massachusetts Department of Transportation - Office of Civil Rights
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Phone: 857-368-8580
Fax: 857-368-0602
Email: MASSDOT.CivilRights@state.ma.us
<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights.aspx>
2. Executive Office of Administration and Finance - Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
One Ashburton Place, Room 213
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 727-7441
Fax: (617) 878-9830
E-mail: Sandra.Borders@state.ma.us
<http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/hrd/office-of-diversity-and-equal-opportunity.html>
3. Massachusetts Office on Disability
One Ashburton Place #1305

Boston, MA 02108

(617) 727-7440 or (800) 322-2020 toll free (both V/TTY)

<http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/>

Conduct Targeted Research

Research the communities involved and the groups and individuals who have been identified.

If a meeting planner is not aware of the racial, ethnic or national origin background of the individual or group being engaged, it is similarly possible to research Title VI groups individually, using query strings to the group or individuals and Massachusetts, the regional area or the locality where the group or individual is based. This information is useful in gaining a basic understanding of traditions, values, beliefs, holidays and relationship to government and/ or transportation which may impact participation.

Reaching out to Potential Title VI Group Members – Anticipating Potential Obstacles to Participation

1. Outreach approaches:
 - a. Look for formal and informal opportunities to engage, collaborate, and build relationships, including calls of introduction made by volunteers who are trusted in the community.
 - b. Use multiple outreach methods
 - c. Tailor materials to the audience, including translations
 - d. Identify existing channels of communication through communities
 - e. Experiment and reflect on the effectiveness of new approaches
 - f. Offer virtual engagements as another opportunity for engagement

In Title VI communities, a range of factors lead to reluctance to participate for individuals and groups that could be helpful in a transportation planning or development process. For example, many times natural leaders are either the heads or well-placed leaders of agencies or community groups; this limits their ability to participate because there are many demands on their time, resources and commitment.

2. Identify the factors that would encourage participation and involvement before reaching out, to be in the best position to explain how it is important for this individual or group to participate. If there is a possibility of grant funding to support participating groups, this can certainly provide an incentive for participation.
3. The following are some common barriers to participation, and reasonable responses that a meeting planner should anticipate, understand and be able to articulate to encourage potential participants to get involved:
 - a. Limited English language skills and/ or limited literacy – it is first important to know that the Old Colony MPO has the ability and obligation to fund translation

and interpretation support and to convey this message. It would be ideal to have a colleague or staff person who speaks the language or is of the culture in question to support the outreach effort, or to use a translator as an intermediary.

- b. Lack of trust due to past experiences - it is important to be in a position to respond with as much information as will demonstrate that both participation and the project are being honestly and openly addressed.
- c. Lack of experience with transportation decision making processes – if this process is not well understood or the meeting convener has a difficult time explaining the process, it is important to have OCPC staff explain the process.
- d. Economic barriers – transportation costs, work schedules – meetings should be sited in the community to avoid cost factors, and they should be timed to meet the schedule of the majority of participants, after due consideration of all schedules, suggested alternatives and needs.
- e. Cultural barriers – there may be intergroup dynamics that make bringing groups together problematic due to class, racial ethnic or political differences. Early research will help build understanding of this possibility, and suggest whether a mediated way of bringing the groups together is an option, or if there is a need to have separate meetings.
- f. Common barriers – time, other demands. The key to this element is making sure that the importance of an effort is clear and well stated to the candidate, including the benefit to an individual or group representative being recruited.

Responding to a Refusal to Participate from a Potential Title VI Participant

1. If a person or group declines to participate in a particular effort, consider that the group may wish to participate on another occasion.
2. Consider sending the individual or organizations updates on the effort that are sent to others. This effort could be informative and demonstrate a good faith effort to be inclusive.

Documenting the Effort to Achieve Diversity and Next Steps

While it may not be possible to achieve a completely diverse committee for purposes of transportation planning, it is still important to document efforts made for outreach for Title VI inclusion purposes. These outputs will help to inform the measures of effectiveness for the entire Plan.

These steps may include the following:

1. The meeting planner should keep a file on available resources and methods used to identify individuals and groups, the nature of the outreach effort, the people invited and the results of a recruitment effort. Possible resources:
 - a. Lists of potential invitees who were considered and/ or accepted

- b. Samples of research conducted and/or consultations made for recruitment
 - c. Copies of invitation e-mails or other correspondence
 - d. Group membership lists, with indications of the Title VI communities represented
 - e. Meeting sign in sheets
 - f. Correspondence from invited individuals
2. Meeting planners should plan to discuss with the members of the group that is ultimately recruited the efforts made to reach out and recruit individuals, including the potential need that may remain after the fact for additional participation by certain Title VI group members or related organizations.
 3. Effective management of the group that is ultimately formed is fundamental to the productivity and longevity of relationships with Title VI community members. Following through with stakeholders to demonstrate that input was considered and/ or had an impact on project parameters, study outcomes, and planned activities can demonstrate to participants the value added to their interests and communities through continued involvement in these activities.

OPEN HOUSES

Title VI Considerations

1. "I Speak" language cards have been provided at the welcome desk.
<http://www.lep.gov/ISpeakCards2004.pdf>
2. If the Old Colony MPO is providing interpretive services at the public meeting/hearing session, then they should also be available during the open house session and their availability should be made clear through signage and/ or announcements. After the session, the Old Colony MPO staff in attendance should relay the nature of questions and concerns identified through interaction with the public to the Old Colony MPO (or designee). It is important for the Old Colony MPO staff working on all stages of project development to know community concerns. Written descriptions of items on display may need to be translated depending on requests received and/ or the anticipated level of LEP participation.

ADA Considerations

1. The open house should be set up in an ADA compliant manner. Please see the Old Colony MPO Accessible Meeting Policy later in this plan.
2. Consider the following when setting up the open house venue:
 - i. Consult the following guide on best practices for text and color contrast considerations when preparing hardcopy and electronic visual aids (such as maps, posters, plans, PowerPoint templates/ graphics, charts, graphs, etc.) Please refer to Lighthouse International for more information:
<http://69.164.214.107/accessibility/design/accessible-print-design/>
 - ii. Pathways that guide attendees to display materials or the Old Colony MPO staff and consultants should be clear of obstructions.

- iii. Proper heights and viewing angles of display materials to make them accessible.
 - iv. Horizontal surfaces used for display should be at a height accessible to individuals that are short of stature and/ or rely on assistive mobility devices.
 - v. Similarly, materials displayed vertically should not be at an excessive height or at an angle that makes them difficult to view.
 - vi. Utilize a microphone for all speakers
3. The Old Colony MPO staff and consultants should be prepared to describe displays to blind or visually impaired attendees.
 4. Alternate versions, (large print, etc.) of public documents (such as informational packets) should be available if requested with sufficient lead time prior to the date of the meeting.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Communicating with Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

If a member of the public is attempting to interact but there is a language barrier, the following procedures are recommended.

1. In-person (such as the Old Colony MPO reception areas, etc.)
 - a. The first step is to identify the preferred language of the individual. The following resources are available:
 - i. "I Speak" cards, <http://www.lep.gov/ISpeakCards2004.pdf>
 - ii. Google Translate (<http://translate.google.com/>) or a similar real-time free online language translator can be used to identify the language. If the member of the public is directed to type on the webpage in a language other than English, the software can "Auto-Detect" which language is being used and provide real-time translations. Assistance from co-workers in your unit that may be able to identify the language.
 - iii. Language Line (<https://www.language.com/>)
 - b. Once the language has been identified, the methods used to address the needs of the individual will change depending on the circumstances.
 - i. Simple inquiries may be addressed informally on-the-spot with the aid of multi-lingual staff or Google Translate (<http://translate.google.com/>) or a similar product. (Example: providing directions around the building/ office to an LEP individual.

An employee and an LEP individual may type or speak into Google Translate software and to carry out a rudimentary conversation. This should remain limited to incidental interactions.
 - ii. More complex issues may require professional translators/ interpreters. Complex issues are those that affect the legal rights of the individual and therefore depend on the accuracy of translations/ interpretations. The

following services are available in those instances:

Language Line (<https://www.languageline.com/>)

Statewide Language Services Contract

Search COMMBUYS website <https://www.commbuys.com/bsa/>

for contract "PRF63" under Contract/ Blanket Description.

- c. Should time be needed to secure professional language services (such as scheduling a meeting with an interpreter or sending out documents to be translated), it should be communicated with the help of Google translate or translated cards of key phrases staff may have for this issue. Stakeholders can also submit their comment to be translated later if they are able.
2. Electronically (includes email, website comment form, etc.).
 - a. For correspondence in a language other than English, Google Translate may be used (<http://translate.google.com/>)
 - b. More complex issues may require professional translators/interpreters referenced above.

Communicating with People with Disabilities

1. Outlined below are tips to help you in communicating with persons with disabilities.
 - a. General Tips:
 - i. When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting).
 - ii. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
 - iii. Relax. Do not be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later," or "Did you hear about that?" that seem to relate to a person's disability.
 - iv. Do not be afraid to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do.
 - b. Tips for Communicating with Individuals who are Blind or Visually Impaired:
 - i. Speak to the individual when you approach him or her.
 - ii. State clearly who you are; speak in a normal tone of voice.
 - iii. When conversing in a group, remember to identify yourself and the person to whom you are speaking.
 - iv. Never touch or distract a service dog without first asking the owner.
 - v. Tell the individual when you are leaving.
 - vi. Do not attempt to lead the individual without first asking; allow the person to hold your arm and control her or his own movements.

- vii. Be descriptive when giving directions; verbally give the person information that is visually obvious to individuals who can see. For example, if you are approaching steps, mention how many steps.
 - viii. If you are offering a seat, gently place the individual's hand on the back or arm of the chair so that the person can locate the seat.
- b. Tips for Communicating with Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:
- i. Gain the person's attention before starting a conversation (i.e., tap the person gently on the shoulder or arm).
 - ii. Look directly at the individual, face the light, speak clearly, in a normal tone of voice, and keep your hands away from your face. Use short, simple sentences.
 - iii. If the individual uses a sign language interpreter, speak directly to the person, not the interpreter.
 - iv. If you telephone an individual who is hard of hearing, let the phone ring longer than usual. Speak clearly and be prepared to repeat the reason for the call and who you are.
- c. Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Mobility Impairments:
- i. If possible, put yourself at the wheelchair user's eye level.
 - ii. Do not lean on a wheelchair or any other assistive device.
 - iii. Never patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.
 - iv. Do not assume the individual wants to be pushed; ask first.
 - v. Offer assistance if the individual appears to be having difficulty opening a door.
 - vi. If you telephone the individual, allow the phone to ring longer than usual to allow extra time for the person to reach the telephone.
- d. Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Speech Impairments:
- i. If you do not understand something the individual says, do not pretend that you do. Ask the individual to repeat what he or she said and then repeat it back.
 - ii. Be patient. Take as much time as necessary.
 - iii. Concentrate on what the individual is saying.
 - iv. Do not speak for the individual or attempt to finish her or his sentences.
 - v. If you are having difficulty understanding the individual, consider writing as an alternative means of communicating, but first ask the individual if this is acceptable.
- e. Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities:
- i. If you are in a public area with many distractions, consider moving to a quiet or private location.

- ii. Offer assistance completing forms or understanding written instructions and provide extra time for decision-making. Wait for the individual to accept the offer of assistance; do not "over-assist" or be patronizing.
- iii. Be patient, flexible and supportive. Take time to understand the individual and make sure the individual understands you.

2. Additional information can be provided by:

- a. MassDOT Office of Civil Rights
<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights.aspx>
- b. MBTA System Wide Accessibility
http://www.mbta.com/riding_the_t/accessible_services/default.asp?id=16901
- c. Massachusetts Office on Disability
<http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/>
- d. Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
<http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/hrd/office-of-diversity-and-equal-opportunity.html>

The Old Colony MPO Accessible Meeting Policy

PURPOSE

This policy outlines criteria that must be fulfilled in order to ensure that all the Old Colony MPO public meetings are fully accessible to persons with disabilities. This document will also address issues related to attendees with limited English proficiency.

The ability to access and participate in state government, including participating in public meetings, is a fundamental right protected by both State and Federal law. The Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law and the Americans with Disabilities Act mandate that persons with disabilities must not be denied participation in public meetings, and that reasonable accommodation requests made by attendees shall be honored. For these reasons, when planning and executing public meetings, the Old Colony MPO personnel must ensure that all aspects of the meeting are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Commonwealth Executive Order 526, the Old Colony MPO must also ensure that programs and activities do not discriminate based on race, color or national origin, age, disability and sex, among other protected categories. The public participation plan should be consulted by meeting planners in coordination with this Accessible Meeting Policy to ensure that the Old Colony MPO includes Title VI constituencies in transportation programs and activities. The method for determining whether and/ or what non-English languages need to be translated or interpreted is called a “four factor analysis.” Essentially, to determine whether translation is needed, meeting planners must analyze the number of limited English proficiency persons (LEP) by language group where a meeting will be held, the frequency of contacts with the program, the importance of the program and cost factors.

This document will provide guidelines for ensuring the accessibility of public meetings hosted by the Old Colony MPO. Components such as the meeting location, room setup, alternate formats and translations of handouts, and the requirement to provide CART and/ or sign language and/ or foreign language interpreters upon request will be discussed.

Definitions of terms used in this policy are available in Appendix D of this plan.

SCOPE

All public meetings hosted by, or on behalf of, the Old Colony MPO.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Old Colony MPO staff charged with the coordination of the public meeting to ensure that the public meeting is accessible to all. The local contacts for the meeting

facility, in conjunction with the responsible Old Colony MPO staff, are responsible for filling out the “Accessibility Checklist for Meeting Planners” in Appendix B to ensure the space is accessible prior to the meeting.

POLICY

General Considerations

1. Public meeting planners shall identify at least one person who is responsible for making sure that the public meeting is accessible for all attendees. This individual shall serve as the contact for attendees requesting reasonable accommodations. See the appendix for a Checklist for Meeting Planners.
2. Public meetings should be planned and publicized as early as possible - ideally, 21 calendar days, but no less than 14 days in advance. Revised agendas shall be posted no less than 48 hours in advance of a public meeting.
3. Meeting notices should include a date by which attendees should request reasonable accommodations - typically ten days before the meeting.

Note: After the cutoff date, staff must still try to provide an accommodation but should not guarantee the provision of the requested accommodation. Attendees shall not be charged for any reasonable accommodation provided.

Choosing a Location

1. Access to Nearby Transportation. All public meetings should be within ¼ mile of an accessible bus stop or rail station, where feasible. For meeting locations not located on fixed route transit service, potential participants should be made aware of the door-to-door paratransit service offered by BAT or GATRA. If neither of these criteria is possible given unique geographic or temporal challenges, has every reasonable attempt been made to allow interested parties to attend the meeting through alternative means?
 - a. The path of travel from the transit stop to the meeting location shall be accessible. Specifically, it should be:
 - i. At least three feet wide
 - ii. Unobstructed (not blocked by trash cans, light poles, etc.)
 - iii. Free of steps, drop-offs or curbs
2. Parking. If parking is available to meeting attendees, meeting planners shall ensure that the number of accessible parking spaces available complies with state and Federal regulations.
 - a. The path of travel from the accessible parking to the meeting location shall be accessible. Specifically, it shall be:
 - i. At least three feet wide
 - ii. Unobstructed (no trash cans, light poles, etc.)

- iii. Free of steps, drop-offs or curbs
3. Identifying the Accessible Entrance. If the main entrance to the building (in which the public meeting is being held) is not the accessible entrance, a sign containing the universal symbol of accessibility with an arrow appropriately pointing to the accessible entrance shall be posted at the main entrance.
 4. Ensure the accessible entrance is unlocked and available to be used independently and that the path of travel to the entrance is well lit (if the meeting is taking place at night). If the door is locked and intercom service or another format is used to gain access, an attendant must be at the door to accommodate deaf or hard of hearing individuals, as well as others with disabilities.
 5. Accessible Restrooms. If restrooms are available for use by the public then all public meetings shall have at least one accessible restroom for men and one accessible restroom for women, or one accessible gender neutral restroom.
 - a. The accessible restrooms shall be within reasonable proximity to the meeting room.
 6. The Meeting Room: The meeting room in which the public meeting will take place shall be made accessible for persons with disabilities. The following shall be provided:
 - a. An integrated seating area for wheeled mobility device users shall be made available.
 - b. If possible, meeting planners should remove several chairs to accommodate potential attendees who use wheeled mobility devices.
 - i. If possible, remove a chair to the side and to the rear of the designated space to ensure enough room for the wheeled mobility device.
 - ii. Such spaces for wheeled mobility device users shall be dispersed throughout the room, and not clustered all in one section (e.g. all in the front or all in the back). This allows attendees using wheeled mobility a variety of seating/viewing options.
 7. Space for Sign Language, CART and Foreign Language Interpreters
 - a. A well-lit area and chairs facing the audience shall be made available for sign language interpreters at the front of the room (likely just off to one side of the main presentation area). If a CART provider is to be used, a small table for the laptop and space for a screen and projector should be provided near an electrical outlet.
 - b. Priority seating at the front of the audience and in direct line of sight of the interpreters/CART provider shall be provided for attendees who are deaf/hard of hearing.
 - c. For foreign language interpreters, there is a need for space where they can sit with the individuals who require language assistance.
 8. Aisles within the meeting room shall be:
 - a. Clear of tripping hazards (e.g. electric cords) to the greatest extent possible. Where cords or other obstacles must cross an aisle to power communications or other device, the hazard should be minimized with tape or other appropriate

means.

- b. At least 3 feet wide.
9. Microphones. The microphones used at public meetings shall be available on a stand that is adjustable in height.
Note: While wireless microphones have become popular, some attendees with disabilities will not be able to hold a microphone independently. In this situation, allowing an attendee use of a microphone stand adjusted to their height is almost always preferable to holding the microphone for them. Alternatively, and particularly for larger meetings, staff with a floating microphone would be preferable to facilitate communication.
10. Podiums. If any attendee may have an opportunity to speak at a podium, meeting planners shall ensure that either:
 - a. The podium is height adjustable, or a small table is provided to the side of the podium.
 - b. If a microphone is provided at the podium, one shall also be provided at the small table.
11. Raised Platforms. If any attendee may have an opportunity to move onto a raised platform or stage during the meeting, the raised platform or stage shall be accessible by:
 - a. A ramp that is at least 3 feet wide, and/or has a platform lift.
12. High Speed Internet Connection. Public meeting rooms shall provide for a high speed internet connection to allow attendees who rely on video remote interpreting or CART. There should also be a conference capable telephone with a speakerphone function available.

Sign Language and Foreign Language Interpreters, Assistive Listening Devices, CART and Video Remote Interpreting

1. Sign Language and/ or foreign language interpreters shall be provided at all public meetings upon request provided request is made to the Title VI Coordinator at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting.
 - a. To ensure their availability, interpreters should be requested at 10 days in advance of the public meeting.
 - b. Meeting attendees will not be charged for costs associated with sign language or foreign language interpretation.
2. Assistive Listening Devices. Assistive Listening Devices for attendees who are hard of hearing shall be provided at all public meetings upon request.
3. CART services shall be provided at all public meetings upon request (See Attachment 6.6 for information on how to provide CART services.). Staff should schedule or make requests for CART services at least two weeks in advance of the meeting, and preferably as soon as an attendee makes this need known. When remote CART services are to be used (the CART reporter is not in the room), staff should try to provide the reporter any

technical terms or acronyms to be used, as well as the names of key meeting attendees before the meeting date.

4. Video Remote Interpreting shall be provided at all public meetings upon request via a computer/ laptop with a webcam and high speed internet connection.

Note: Video Remote Interpreting is a relatively new form of technology and may be an adequate alternative to providing sign language interpreters in certain situations. However, if an attendee requests Video Remote Interpreting, sign language interpreters will be an adequate substitute, if the meeting planner cannot secure the requested technology.

Alternative Formats and Translation of Handouts/Presentation Material

These requirements are the same with respect to translation into foreign languages, where the language requested is identified through application of the four-factor analysis process, set forth in the Old Colony MPO Title VI Language Assistance Plan. When a language group is small, defined as 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered, foreign language translations of "vital documents" should be provided, and non-vital documents may be orally translated. This requirement does not affect the requirement to provide meaningful translation to one or more in a small group of LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters or translation where language services are needed and are reasonable.

Large Print Version

If requested to the Old Colony Title VI Coordinator at least 24 hours before the meeting, any text-based printed material to be handed out during the meeting shall be made available in large print.

Large print meeting materials shall:

1. Be created using "Arial" font with a font size of 16 pt.
2. Have the same information as the original handout.
3. Have the highest contrast possible (e.g. black on white).
4. If graphics (such as images, tables, or graphs) are used in the original document, the same graphics shall be included in the large print version of the document.
 - a. If graphics are used in the large print document, a brief description of the image shall be provided. Image descriptions shall be brief and provide the viewer of the document with a general idea of what is in the image.
 - b. If tables or graphs are used in the large print document, a summary of the table or graph shall be provided.

Braille Version

If a Braille version of materials is requested to the Old Colony MPO Title VI coordinator at least 10

days in advance of the meeting, this version shall be available for the meeting, if no advance request is made but rather is requested at or after the meeting, then Meeting materials shall be made available in Braille within 14 calendar days of the request.

Foreign Language Version

If a common foreign language version of materials is requested to the Old Colony MPO Title VI Coordinator at least 10 days in advance of the meeting, this version shall be available for the meeting, if no advance request is made but rather is requested at or after the meeting, then Meeting materials shall be made available in the language requested within 14 calendar days of the request.

Other requests for alternate formats

Individual attendees may have unique specifications for alternate formats. Best efforts will be made to honor all reasonable requests.

Meeting attendees will not be charged for any cost affiliated with the creation of alternate formats of meeting material.

Publicizing the Meeting

Public meetings shall be publicized as early as possible, ideally 21 calendar days in advance, but not less than 14 calendar days in advance. This allows attendees time to submit requests for reasonable accommodations and for meeting planners to set deadlines for accommodation requests to be made in a timely manner. The meeting publicity also needs to be translated into the languages that are identified through application of the four factor analysis set forth in the Old Colony MPO Title VI Language Assistance Plan.

All meeting notices shall include:

1. The statement "This location is accessible to persons with disabilities".
2. A brief listing of accessibility features that either are available or may be made available upon request during the public meeting (e.g. sign language, CART, assistive listening devices and/ or foreign language interpreters).
3. Information on how to request reasonable accommodations by phone, e-mail or fax and the deadline for requests.
4. Information on how to request foreign language interpreter assistance.
5. See Attachment for a sample meeting posting.

Additional Considerations

1. Within 48 hours, meeting planners shall follow-up with attendees who have requested reasonable accommodations to let them know their request has been received and will

be honored to the extent possible.

Note: Especially in the case of sign language interpreters, the meeting planner may not know of their availability until 24 hours prior to the meeting. It is reasonable to let people know their request has been received and that it is in the process of being put in place, however if no interpreter is available people need to be notified and alternate plans must be made, such as CART or Video Relay.

2. When opening a public meeting, presenters shall announce
 - a. The presence and function of sign language interpreters (if interpreters are in the room), and/ or CART providers
 - b. That assistive listening equipment is available
 - c. The location of accessible restrooms
3. When presenting, presenters at public meetings shall:
 - a. Speak slowly and clearly so that the sign language interpreters have time to interpret.
 - b. Verbally describe information presented visually (e.g. PowerPoint) so that attendees with visual impairments can access the information.
 - c. Ensure that any videos/ DVDs shown during the meeting are encoded with closed captioning and are shown on a closed caption compatible device. Subtitles are an acceptable alternative.

Ensuring adequate accessible parking

1. See <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/dps/aab-regs/521023.pdf> for Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) regulations
2. See <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-aba-standards/guide-to-the-aba-standards/chapter-5-parking> for Americans with Disabilities Act Architectural Guidelines (ADAAG)

Accessible Restrooms

1. See <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/dps/aab-regs/521030.pdf> for Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) regulations
2. See <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-aba-standards/guide-to-the-aba-standards?highlight=WyJ0b2lsZXQiLCJ0b2lsZXRzliwidG9pbGV0aW5nIl0=> for Americans with Disabilities Act Architectural Guidelines (ADAAG)

Sign Language Interpreters

How to request sign language, CART Providers or foreign language interpreters:

1. Complete and submit an on-line request for interpreting services through the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's (MCDHH) website
 - a. Go to <http://mass.gov/mcdhh>
 - b. Click on "Request an Interpreter" or "Request a CART Provider"
2. Requests should be also be submitted to the Old Colony MPO's Title VI Coordinator no later than 10 calendar days in advance of the meeting to ensure interpreter availability.
3. If the meeting is cancelled or rescheduled, interpreter requests must be canceled at least 48 hours advance in order to avoid being billed for the service. CART providers must be cancelled no later than 72 hours in advance of the event.
4. Interpreters' invoices are billed as a minimum of two hours.
5. For meetings that are anticipated to last more than 75 minutes, two interpreters shall be provided. In most situations, one CART provider is sufficient if the meeting is no longer than three hours.

CART Providers

How to reserve CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation) providers:

1. Complete and submit an on-line request for interpreting services through the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's (MCDHH) website
2. Go to <http://mass.gov/mcdhh>
3. Click on "Request an Interpreter" or "Request a CART Provider"
4. Click on "Online request" and follow listed directions

Foreign Language Interpreters/Translators

The Old Colony MPO's policy combines the use of bilingual staff, interpreter services and translated materials to communicate effectively with persons who are not fluent in English. When a request for oral interpretation is made, or a significant language speaking population is expected to attend a public meeting, the following steps should be reviewed and carried out to ensure compliance with Title VI requirements.

1. Conduct a four-factor analysis as to the kind of meeting in question and the populations that are in the affected communities, using the language group maps that are contained in the Language Assistance Plan.
2. Identify the languages that are likely to be needed and consult with the MA Office of Diversity and Civil Rights Title VI Coordinator and/or Specialist for assistance with any problems concerning the language groups that may require interpreter services.
3. Identify the source for interpreter services, recognizing that most providers require one-

two weeks advance notice of a meeting, based on the language(s) to be interpreted.

Request and cancellation timeframes

1. Requests should be submitted at least 10 calendar days in advance of the meeting to ensure interpreter availability.
2. If the meeting is cancelled or rescheduled, interpreter requests must be canceled at least 48 hours advance in order to avoid being billed for the service
3. Interpreter invoices vary by provider but may have a minimum of two to three hours.
4. For meetings that are anticipated to last more than 75 minutes, two interpreters shall be provided.

How to reserve assistive listening devices

To reserve an assistive listening device contact the Old Colony Planning Council at 508-583-1833 Extension 202. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), fax (857-368-0602), TTD/TTY (857-368-0603) or by email MASSDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us.

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Title VI Maps

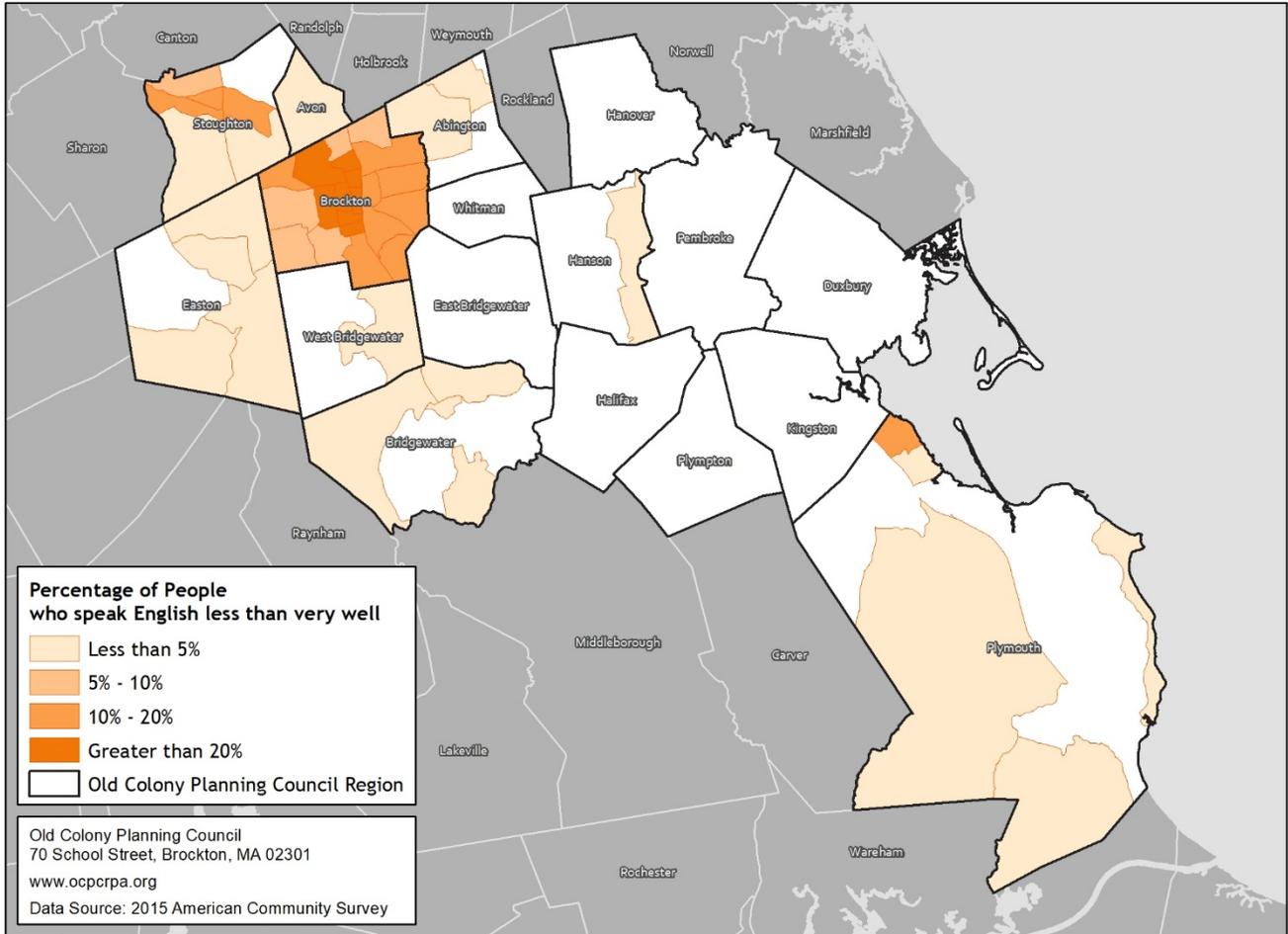
Appendix B: Accessibility Checklist for Meeting Planners

Appendix C: Sample Meeting Posting

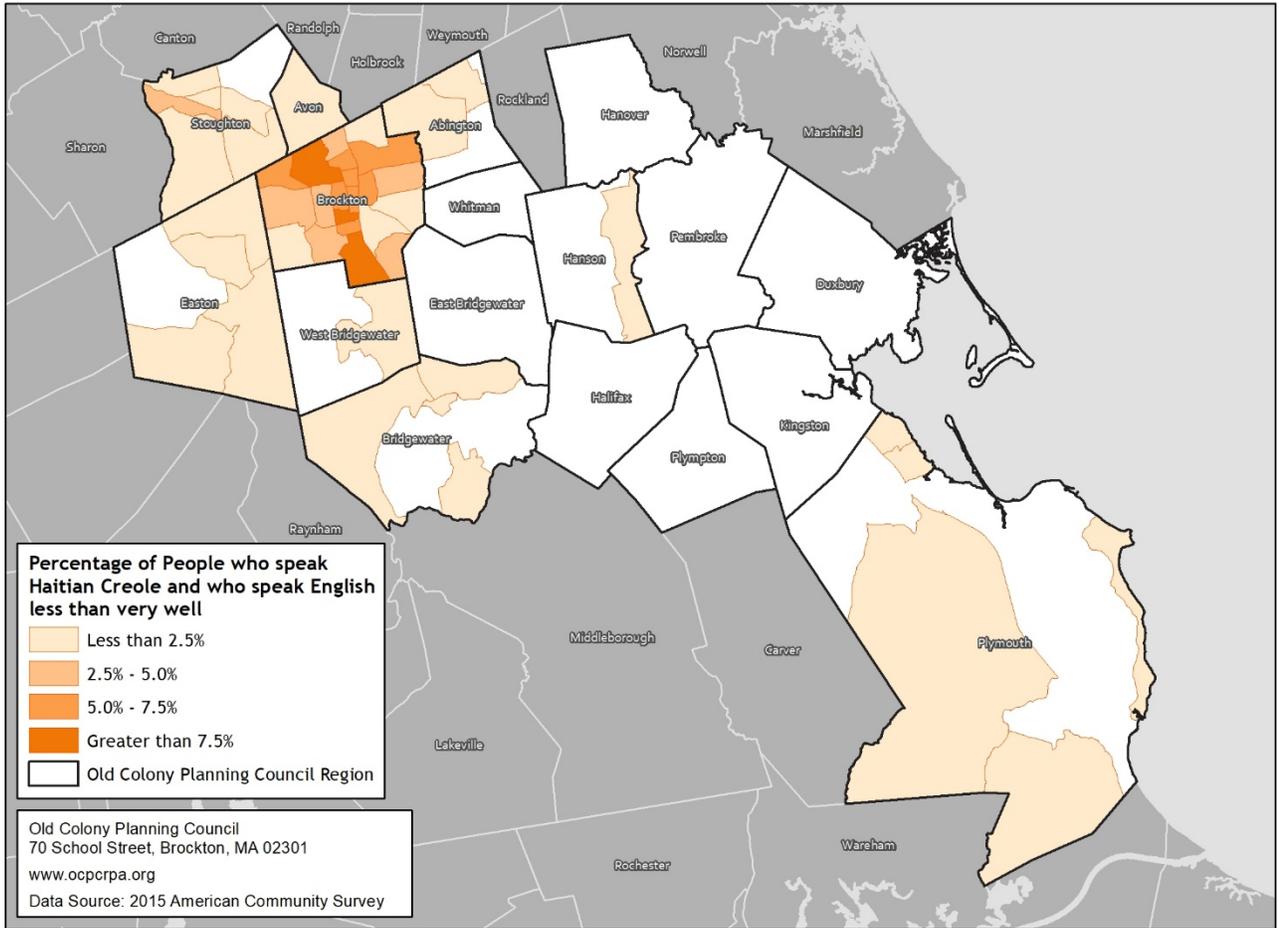
Appendix D: Definitions

Appendix A: Title VI Maps

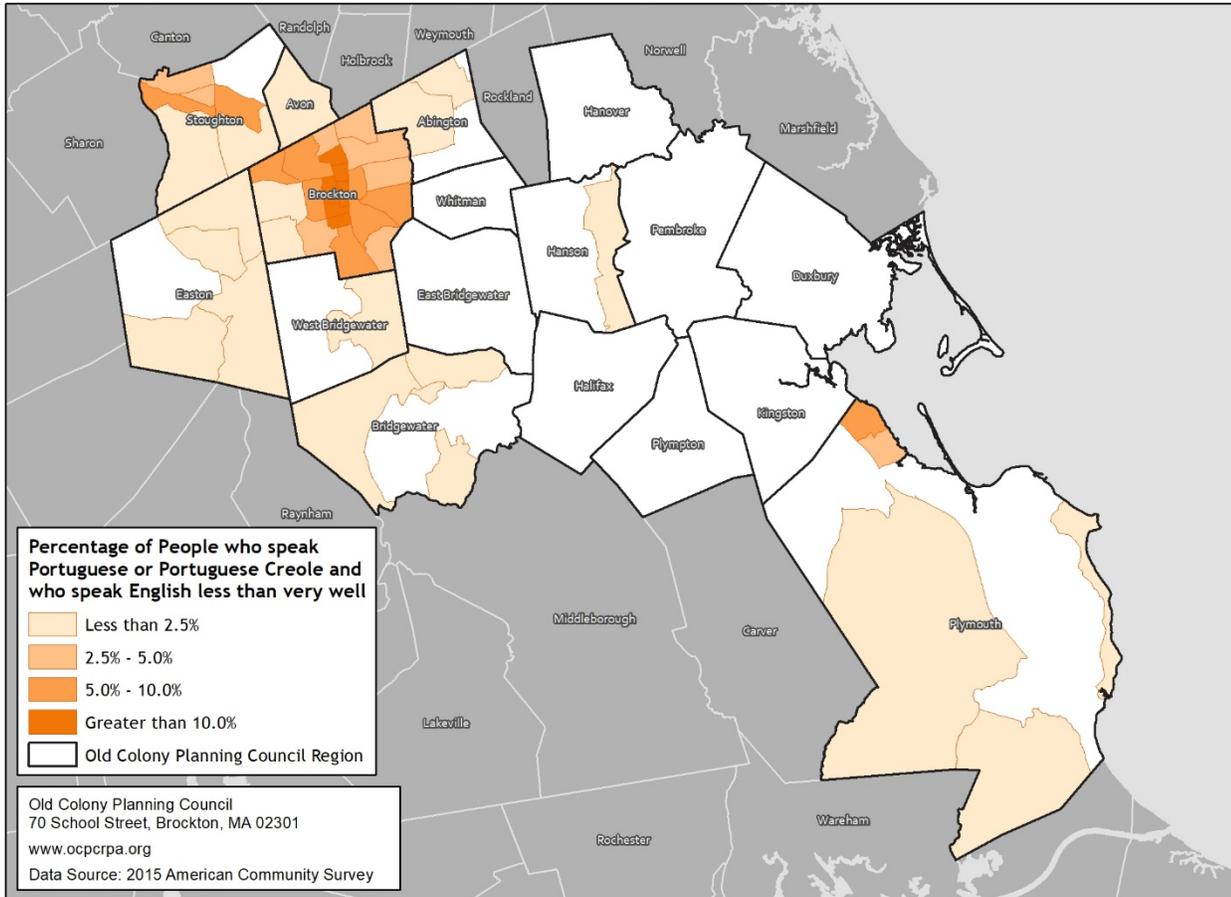
Limited English Proficiency



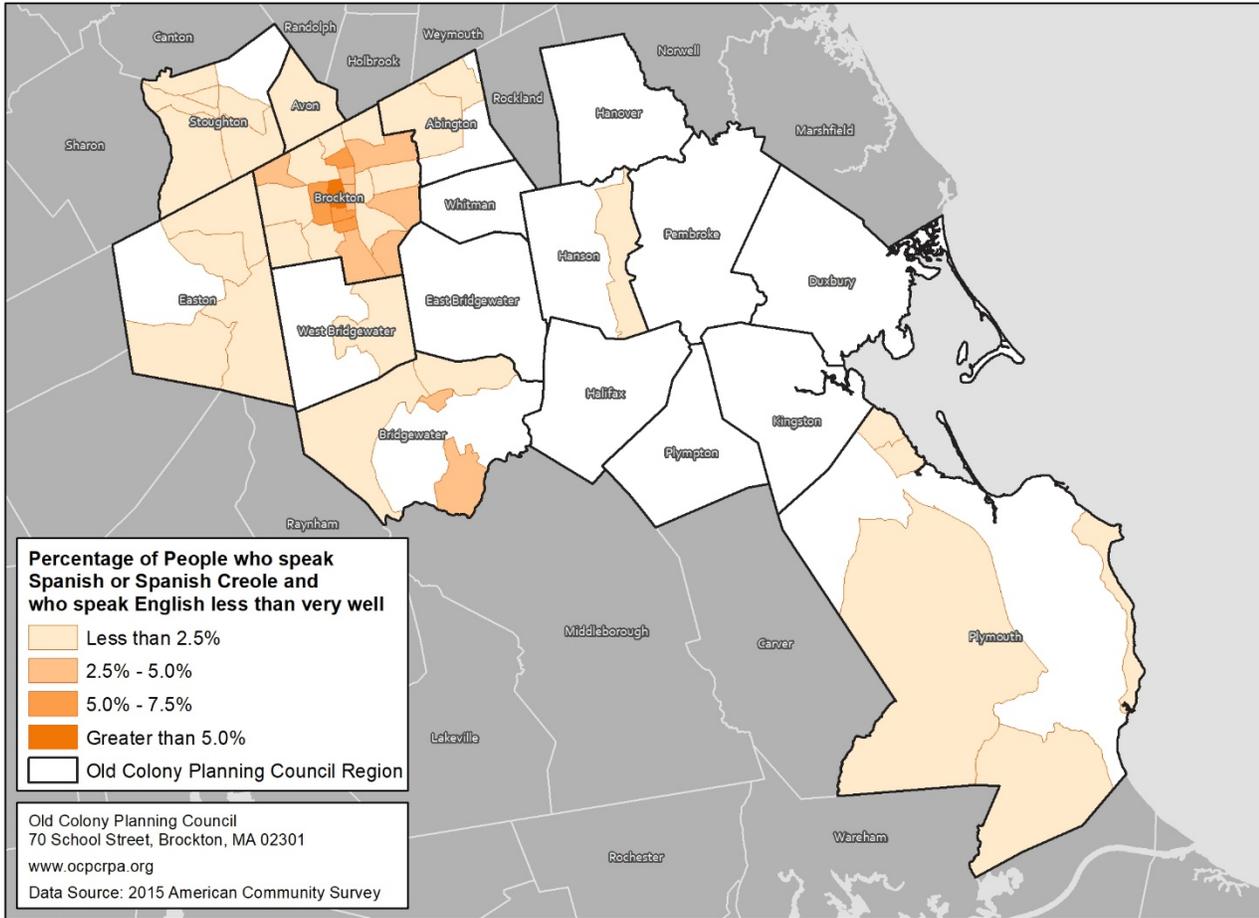
Limited English Proficiency: Haitian Creole



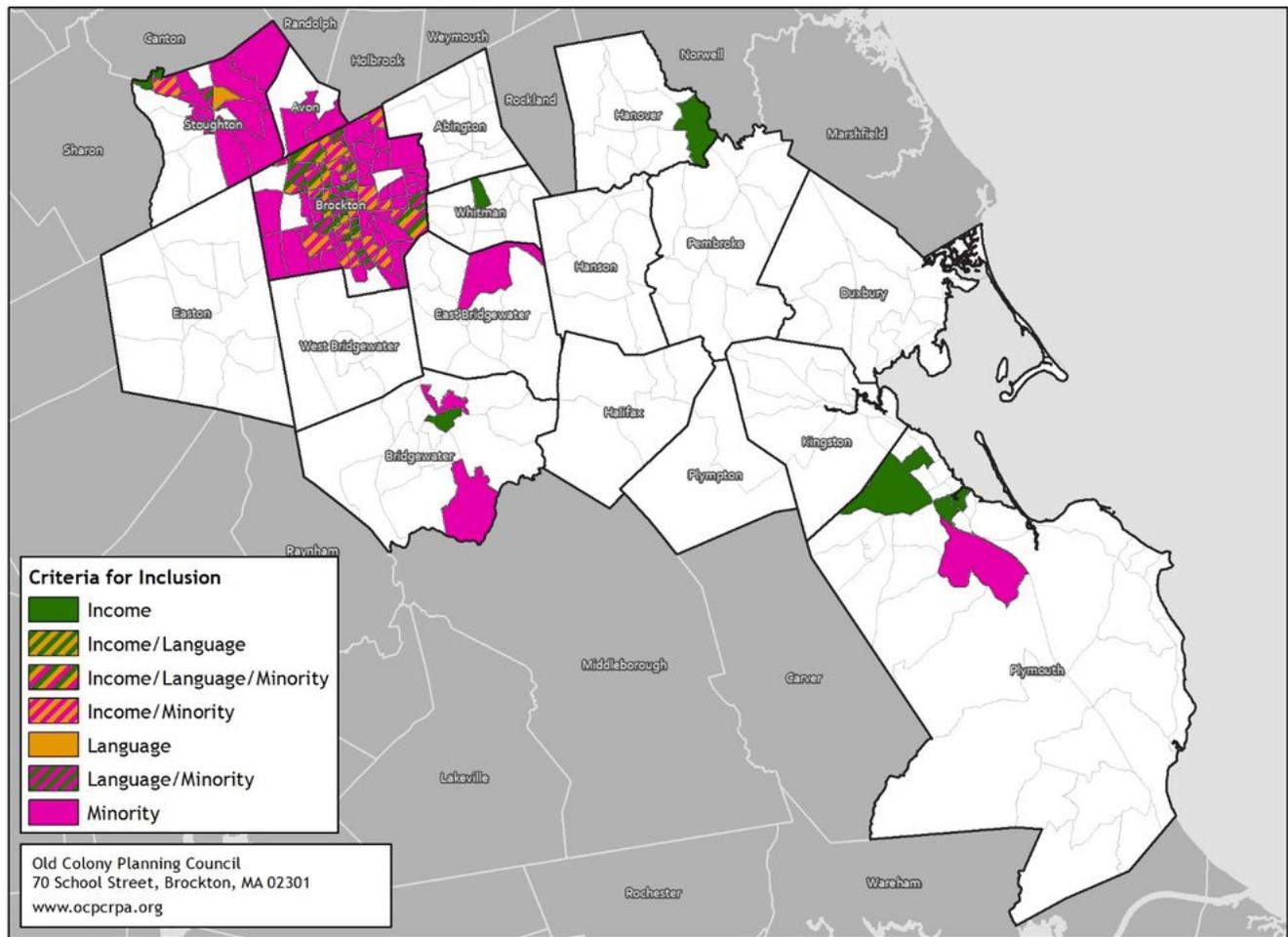
Limited English Proficiency: Portuguese or Portuguese Creole



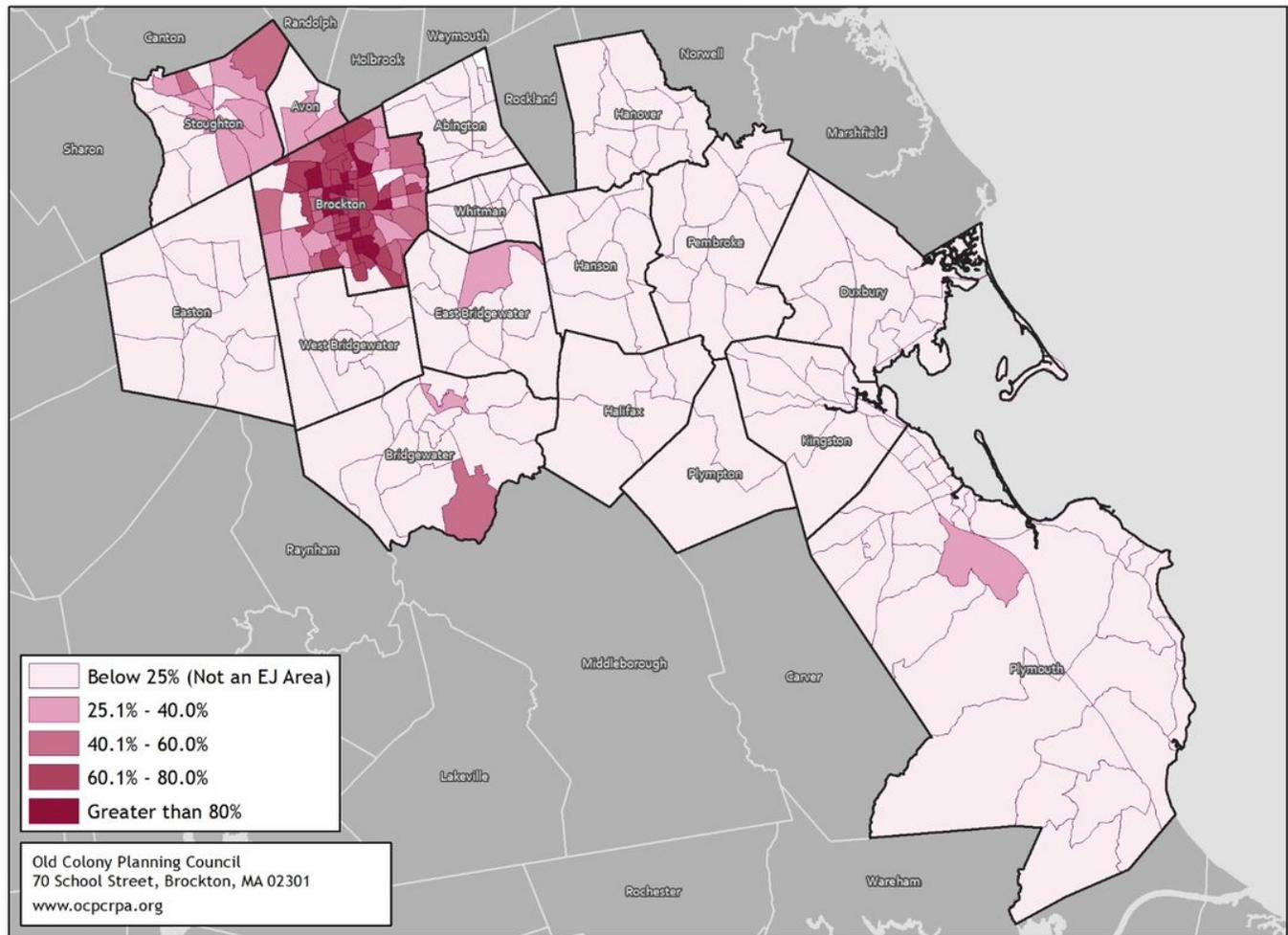
Limited English Proficiency: Spanish or Spanish Creole



Environmental Justice Block Groups (2019)



Environmental Justice Block Groups (2019) - Percentage of Minority Residents



Appendix B: Accessibility Checklist for Meeting Planners

Meeting Date: _____

Meeting Time: _____

Subject of Meeting: _____

Location: _____

- The Old Colony MPO Attendees: Is there at least one person or Department who is responsible for ensuring that the public meeting is accessible for all attendees?

Print Name/Department: _____

Publicizing Meeting:

- Has the public meeting been publicized at least 2 weeks in advance?
- Has the meeting been publicized on the calendar section of the OCPC website and made available to the city and town clerks of the region?
- Has the meeting been publicized in the required foreign languages and ethnic newspapers for the relevant populations in the community where the meeting is to be held, if applicable?
- Does the public meeting notice include accessibility information, how to request a reasonable accommodation, relevant dates for making requests and information on whom to contact to request a reasonable accommodation?
- Does the public meeting notice include information on how to request foreign language interpreters?

Facility: _____

Date of Facility Assessment: _____

- Is the meeting location 1/4 mile or less from the nearest accessible bus stop or rail station, and/ or will BAT service and/ or GATRA service be available at the time of the meeting? If neither of these criteria is possible given unique geographic or temporal challenges, has every reasonable attempt been made to allow interested parties to attend the meeting through alternative means?

- Where applicable, is there an accessible path of travel provided from the public transportation stop to the meeting location and meeting room?

- If parking will be available at the meeting location, are there accessible parking spaces available (review # of car and van accessible spaces)?

- Is there an accessible path of travel provided from the accessible parking area to the meeting area?

- If the main entrance to the building is not accessible, is there directional signage towards the accessible entrance?

- Is the accessible entrance unlocked and able to be used independently? If the meeting is taking place at night, is the path leading to the alternate entrance well lit?

- If there are restrooms that are open to the public, is there a pair of accessible restrooms available within close proximity of the meeting area? If not, is there at least one accessible gender neutral restroom?

- If there are public phones, is there at least one accessible (TTY and within appropriate height range) telephone available?

- If a stage or platform will be used during the public meeting, is it accessible?

- If a podium will be used during the public meeting, is the podium height adjustable? If not, is there a small table (between 28 and 34 inches in height) provided to the side of the podium?

- Is there a high speed internet connection within the meeting space?

Ensuring Appropriate Accommodations:

- Have sign language and foreign language interpreters, if requested, been reserved for the public meeting?
- Have CART services, if requested, been reserved for the public meeting?
- Are Assistive Listening Devices available for the public meeting? Does someone know how to use the device? Have you checked the devices at least 24 to 48 hours before the meeting and rechecked immediately before the meeting starts? (Note: For large meetings, to avoid the loss of equipment, it is reasonable to ask for a driver's license or other ID as collateral.)
- If requested, are large print copies of meeting handouts available?
- Are printed materials available upon request, in alternative formats and/or relevant foreign languages?
- Are film or video presentations closed captioned and audio described?

Facility/ Room Setup (prior to meeting):

- If the main entrance to the building is not accessible, is the accessible entrance unlocked?
- Is there an integrated seating area for individuals who use a wheeled mobility device in the meeting room?
- Is there seating available for attendees who are deaf or hard of hearing, and have requested an accommodation, near the front of the meeting room so that attendees may see the interpreter/ captioner, or lip read?
- Is there an appropriately lit area in the front of the room for sign/ foreign language interpreters and/ or CART providers?
- Are the aisles at least three feet wide and clear of obstacles or tripping hazards?
- If microphones are used during the public meeting, are adjustable microphone stands available for attendees? Can staff be used as floaters with microphones as an alternative?

For recordkeeping and reporting purposes, the meeting planner should submit a copy of this completed checklist along with a copy of the meeting agenda to the Old Colony Title VI Coordinator. The Old Colony Title VI coordinator will submit these checklists to the following along with the annual Title VI submission to:

Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Office of Diversity and Civil Rights
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Appendix C: Sample Meeting Posting

Agenda

DATE: <DATE OF EVENT>

TIME: <TIME OF EVENT>

PLACE: <PLACE OF EVENT>

- Agenda item
- Agenda item

This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities. The Old Colony Planning Council/ Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization provides reasonable accommodations and/ or language assistance free of charge upon request (including but not limited to interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats, such as audio tapes, Braille and large print, as available). For accommodations or language assistance please contact the Old Colony Planning Council by phone: (508) 583-1833 Extension 202, fax (508) 559-8768 or by email at information@ocpcrpa.org.

The Old Colony MPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The Old Colony MPO operates without regard to race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, sex, disability, ancestry, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, creed, veteran's status, or background. Any person who believes him/ herself or any specific class of persons, to be subject to discrimination prohibited by Title VI may by him/ herself or by representative file a written complaint with the Old Colony MPO. Complaints are to be filed no later than 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination. This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency. Accessibility accommodations and language services will be provided free of charge, upon request, as available. Please contact Mary Waldron at 508-583-1833 Extension 202 for more information.

- If this information is needed in another language, please contact Mary Waldron at 508-583-1833 Extension 202.
- Se esta informação é necessária em outro idioma, entre em contato com Mary Waldron em 508-583-1833 Ramal 202.
- Si se necesita esta información en otro idioma, por favor póngase en contacto con Mary Waldron al 508-583-1833 extensión 202.
- Si yo bezwen enfòmasyon sa a nan yon lòt lang, tanpri kontakte Mary Waldron nan 508-583-1833 Ekstansyon 202.

The public discussion of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at Old Colony JTC, Old Colony MPO, and transportation meetings satisfies the Program of Projects (POP) public hearing requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Appendix D: Definitions

Public Meeting - Any meeting open to the general public, hosted by or on behalf of the Old Colony MPO, during which information is shared.

Attendee - An individual attending a public meeting.

Reasonable Accommodation - Any reasonable service, aid, modification or adjustment to the public meeting that gives a person with a disability the opportunity to be an active participant in the meeting process.

Path of Travel - A continuous, unobstructed way of pedestrian passage by means of which an area may be approached, entered, and exited.

TTY (Text Telephone) - An electronic device for text communication via a telephone line, used when one or more of the parties has a hearing or speech-related disability. Public payphones equipped with TTY have a small keyboard that pulls out underneath the phone. Note: TTYs are gradually phasing out for many people due to the increased use of voice and video relay, but they will remain in use for some period into the future.

Clear floor space - The minimum unobstructed floor or ground space required to accommodate a single, stationary wheelchair and occupant.

Wheeled Mobility Device - Means by which some individuals with physical disabilities travel throughout their environment. Commonly refers to such devices as wheelchairs (manual and motorized) and scooters. Non-traditional wheeled mobility devices may include Segways and bicycles.

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter - An individual trained to facilitate communication between a deaf American Sign Language user and hearing individuals via American Sign Language.

Assistive Listening Device - An electronic device used by individuals who are hard of hearing to amplify sound. The assistive listening device is usually used as a system where the audio source is broadcast wirelessly over an FM frequency. The person who is listening may use a small FM Receiver to tune into the signal and listen at their preferred volume. There are other forms of Assistive Listening Devices that exist and could be used as alternatives.

CART (Computer Assisted Real-time Transcription) - A trained operator uses keyboard or stenography methods to transcribe spoken speech into written text. This may be done either on site or remotely by using a voice connection such as a telephone, cell phone, or computer microphone to send the voice to the operator and the real-time text is transmitted back over an Internet connection. For meeting rooms without an internet connection, it is possible to

establish connectivity via a WIFI router connection or by using a wireless “hot spot.”

Video Remote Interpreting - A contracted video service that allows individuals who are Deaf to communicate over webcams/ video phones with hearing people in real-time, via a sign language interpreter.

Video and Telecommunication (Voice) Relay Services - Video Relay Service (VRS) is a form of Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) that enables persons with hearing disabilities who use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment, rather than through typed text. Video equipment links the VRS user with a TRS operator, called a “communications assistant” (CA), so that the VRS user and the CA can see and communicate with each other in signed conversation. The VRS caller, using a television or a computer with a video camera device and a broadband (high speed) Internet connection, contacts a VRS CA, who is a qualified sign language interpreter. They communicate with each other in sign language through a video link. The VRS CA then places a telephone call to the party the VRS user wishes to call. The VRS CA relays the conversation back and forth between the parties in sign language with the VRS user, and by voice with the called party. No typing or text is involved.

Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) is a telephone service that allows persons with hearing or speech disabilities to place and receive telephone calls. TRS uses operators, called communications assistants (CAs), to facilitate telephone calls between people with hearing and speech disabilities and other individuals. A TRS call may be initiated by either a person with a hearing or speech disability, or a person without such disability. When a person with a hearing or speech disability initiates a TRS call, the person uses a teletypewriter (TTY) or other text input device to call the TRS relay center, and gives a CA the number of the party that he or she wants to call. The CA in turn places an outbound traditional voice call to that person. The CA then serves as a link for the call, relaying the text of the calling party in voice to the called party, and converting to text what the called party voices back to the calling party. VRS and TRS are overseen by the Federal Communications Commission and private contractors who perform the intermediary communication service are reimbursed for this service.

Closed Captioning - A term describing several systems developed to display text on a television, computer or video screen to provide additional or interpretive information to viewers/ listeners who wish to access it. Closed captions typically display a transcription of the audio portion of a program (either verbatim or in edited form), sometimes including non-speech elements.

Descriptive Video/Described Narration - A feature that makes television programs, videos, films, and other visual media accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired by providing descriptive narration of key visual elements in programs. Key visual elements in a program that a viewer who is visually impaired would ordinarily miss are described by voice.

Actions, costumes, gestures and scene changes are just a few of the elements that, when

described, engage the blind or visually impaired viewer with the story.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) - Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or “LEP.” These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.

Four Factor Analysis - Federal DOT guidance outlines four factors recipients should consider to assess language needs and decide what steps they should take to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to the LEP community.
4. The resources available to the MPO and overall cost.

In each instance, this analysis will enable the MPO staff to determine the extent of language assistance that must be provided to enable LEP individuals to participate in a program or activity. For further information, including answers to specific situations that meeting planners may encounter; planners should consult the ADA Coordinator, the Title VI Specialist and/or the Language Access Plan.

Vital Document - A vital document is determined by the context of a program, service or activity, and can include but not be limited to an application, notice, complaint form, legal contract, and outreach material published by a covered entity in a tangible format that informs individuals about their rights or eligibility requirements for benefits and participation.

Language Access Plan - Under Federal Executive Order Executive Order 13166, each Federal agency is required to prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons. Each plan is required to be consistent with the standards set forth in related guidance, and shall include the steps the agency will take to ensure that eligible LEP persons can meaningfully access the agency's programs and activities.

The Old Colony MPO’s Language Assistance Plan is available on the Old Colony MPO webpage at: http://www.ocpcrpa.org/docs/mpo/Old_Colony_LEP_Plan.pdf