

Measure of Effectiveness

Measuring Public Participation Engagement
Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization
70 School Street Brockton MA 02301

March 2022

Prepared Under MassDOT Contract #114676

Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC)

OCPC Officers

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Treasurer	Douglas Sylvestre
Secretary	Sandra Wright

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OCPC Staff

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William McNulty	Principal Transportation Planner
Guoqiang Li	Principal Transportation Planner
Kyle Mowatt	Senior Transportation Planner
Shawn Bailey	Senior Transportation Planner
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Jamey Tesler	Secretary and CEO, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
Jonathan Gulliver	Highway Administrator, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
Michael Lambert	Administrator, Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT)
Christine Joy	President, Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC)

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JTC Vice Chairman	Daniel Salvucci

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MassDOT	Derek Shooster
MassDOT District 5	Mary-Joe Perry
MassDOT District 5	Pamela Haznar, P.E.
BAT	Michael Lambert
BAT	Glenn Ann Geiler
FHWA	Andrew Reovan
FTA	Leah Sirmin
FTA	Peter Butler
Brockton Traffic Commission	Captain Mark Porcaro

OCPC Transportation Staff

Charles Kilmer, AICP	Assistant Director/ Transportation Program Manager
Shawn Bailey	Senior Transportation Planner
Raymond Guarino	Principal Transportation Planner
Guoqiang Li	Principal Transportation Planner
William McNulty	Principal Transportation Planner
Kyle Mowatt	Senior Transportation Planner
Andrew Vidal	GIS Manager

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。

Vietnamese

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.

Russian

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

French

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-អ្នកត្រូវការបកប្រែព័ត៌មាននេះ សូមទាក់ទងអ្នកសម្របសម្រួលជំពូកទី**6** 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 December 2019

Old Colony Planning Council

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Introduction

Public Participation is a key ingredient in the Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) transportation planning efforts. Public Participation not only leads to better projects, studies, and outcomes, but also helps spend limited funding in a manner in line with community and regional goals. In addition to helping develop better projects, public outreach fosters greater trust between citizens and Local, State, and the Federal Government and their representative entities like the Old Colony MPO. Lastly, the MPO is required by State and Federal partners to ensure it is including members of the public in the transportation planning process.

In order ensure the Old Colony MPO is meeting its public participation requirements, measures are necessary to determine whether its Public Participation Plan (PPP) is accomplishing its goals. Through a series of data collection efforts that take place during outreach efforts, the MPO gets the ability to see where the PPP is succeeding and where there are opportunities for greater participation. This report explores outreach efforts and measures their effectiveness in expanding public participation by members of the public and outside organizations in MPO planning activities.

Measuring Public Participation

In order to better understand how the MPO is meeting its commitment to fostering public engagement in all MPO planning activities, it is key to develop a series of measurements to better understand the effectiveness of the public outreach efforts. It is through the tracking of public engagements, whether it be in person, via email, through social media or utilizing virtual public engagement, that the MPO can determine if its public outreach efforts are delivering the results that are desired and required.

Evaluation of Outreach Efforts

The Old Colony MPO tracks all 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 of this information the MPO gains greater clarity on where it is doing well and where there is a need to increase public engagement. The items tracked are known as Measures of Effectiveness (MOE). The MOEs are listed below:

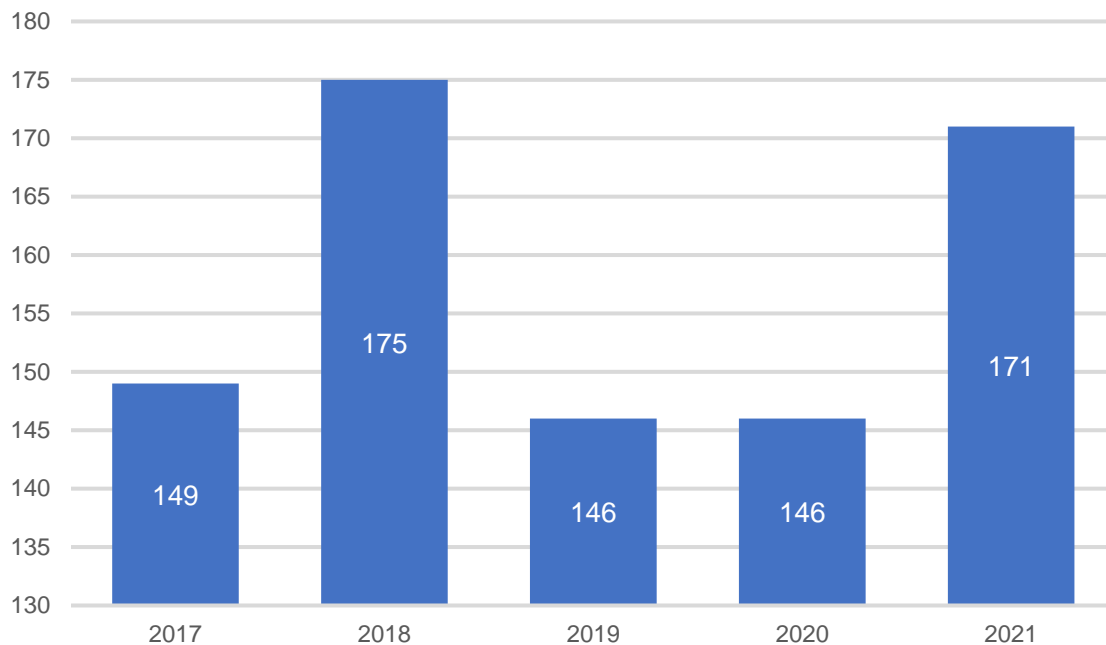
Measures of Effectiveness (MOE)

- Meeting attendance
- Number of LEP/Title VI protect class encounters
- Number of documents translated into the four LEP safe harbor clause languages
- Number of direct engagements with outside organizations
- Number of correspondence (social media, direct mailings, email, etc.)

Engagement Overall

The Old Colony MPO engages in a number of public outreaches each year. Last year in 2021, OCPC either participated in or hosted a total of 171 outreach engagements, which was 25 more than 2020. Some of these engagements were public meetings for projects or initiatives. Other encounters were direct engagement activities with outside organizations or participation in other organization's meetings or events to bring greater attention to the role of the MPO. The MPO also hosts a series of scheduled public meetings throughout the year. Two of those scheduled meetings are the Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting and the Joint Transportation Committee meeting, both of which take place most months throughout the year.

Figure 1: Overall Engagement by Year

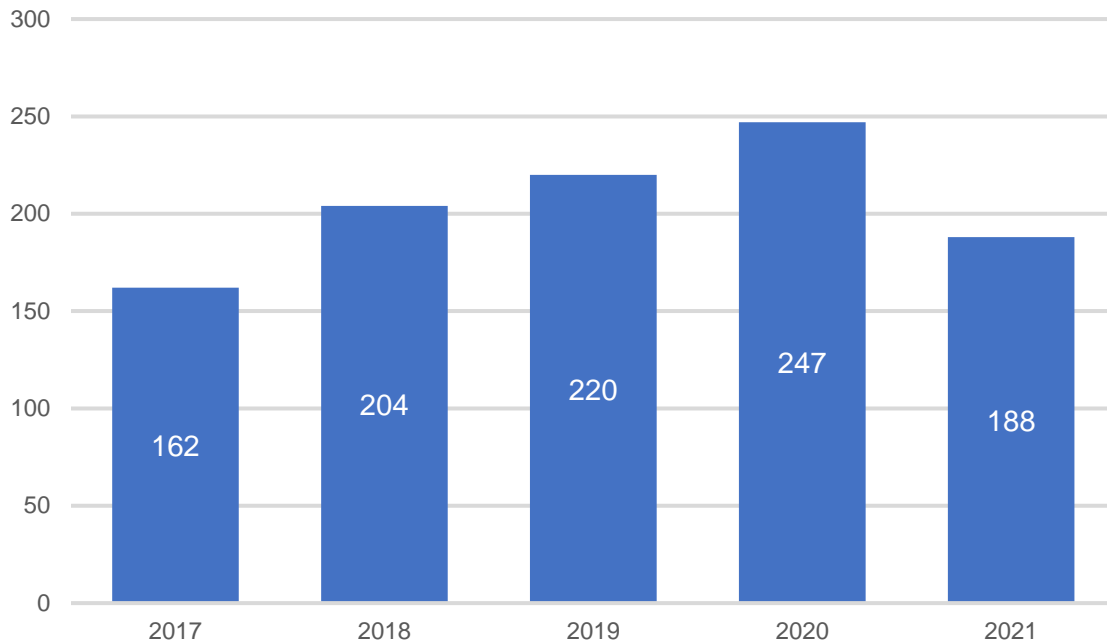


Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meetings

The Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting is where transportation policy decisions are discussed, and the Transportation Improvement Program's (TIP) list of projects are reviewed. The Old Colony MPO hosts on average of nine (9) MPO meetings throughout the year with an average attendance of 24 persons per meeting during 2021. Total attendance at MPO meetings has increased for four years from 2017 to 2020, with the highest total in 2020 as more people were able to attend remotely because the meetings held starting in March 2020 were virtual meetings. In the year 2021, attendance was lower than the previous three years, however it should be noted that 2021 had two fewer meetings than 2020 (10 meetings) and one fewer meeting than 2018 and 2019 (nine meetings each year). If there were two additional meetings in 2021 that had the average monthly attendance, then the total attendance would have been 236 people.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, correspondence from the MPO has been only digital via email. Meeting information and agenda are emailed to 345 individuals or various organizations on the Old Colony MPO's contact list. These emailings increased in 2021 due to added individuals and organizations as time has gone by and the continued use of Zoom to host virtual meetings.

Figure 2: MPO Attendance by Year

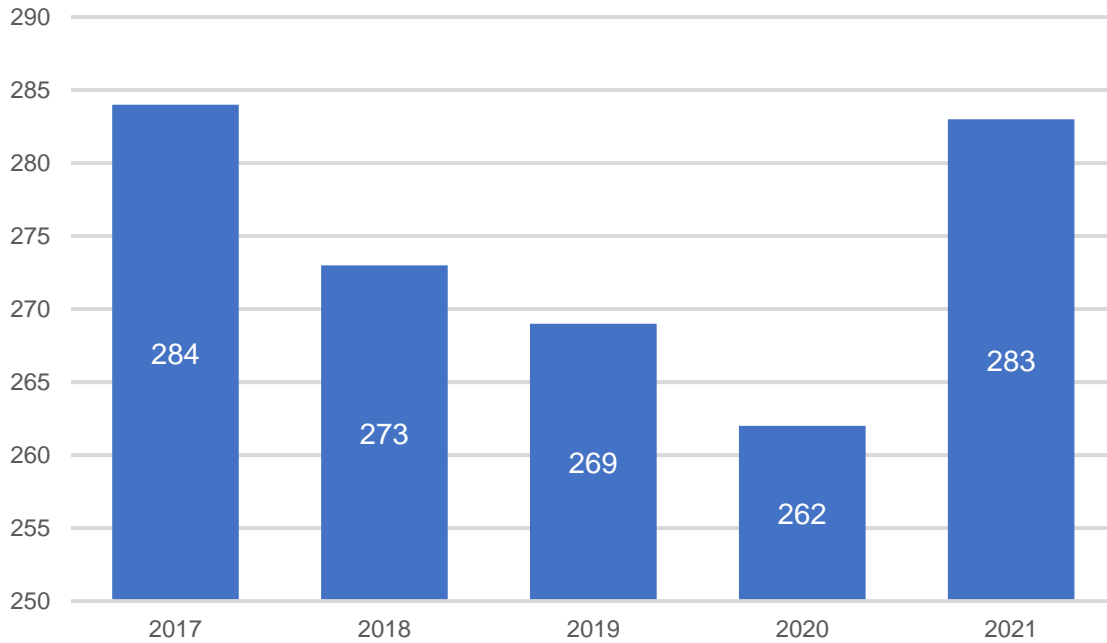


Joint Transportation Committee (JTC)

The Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) is an advisory committee to the Old Colony MPO. The JTC is a venue where the public can be involved in the scheduling of transportation projects to better utilize limited funding. These meetings tend to happen monthly with an average of 10 meetings per year. The average JTC meeting attendance was 26 participants for 2021, with an average of 28 participants over the last five years. Over the last five years, the number of total yearly attendance decreased every year from 2017 to 2020 and spiked back to 2017 levels in 2021. Some of the decline can be contributed to weather events canceling JTC meetings and there may be other contributing factors, such as work/meeting schedule conflicts or other personal time constraints that keep members of the public from attending. It should be noted that there were two fewer meetings in 2019 and 2020 than in 2021. If there was one additional meeting in 2019 and 2020 that experienced that year's average attendance (30 and 29 attendees respectively), then the total attendance would have been 299 attendees in 2019 and 291 attendees in 2020. There were also meetings in every month in 2021 except for July, which is a common month missed being the beginning of the Fiscal Year. It should be noted that attendance has increased since the initiation of virtual meetings allowing attendees to participate from home or their office.

As with the MPO, correspondence sent out to the public covering JTC meetings and the topics to be discussed is emailed as well. Meeting information and agenda are emailed to 311 individuals or various organizations on the Old Colony MPO's contact list. These emailings have increased above 2020 like the MPO because JTC shares the same email contact list.

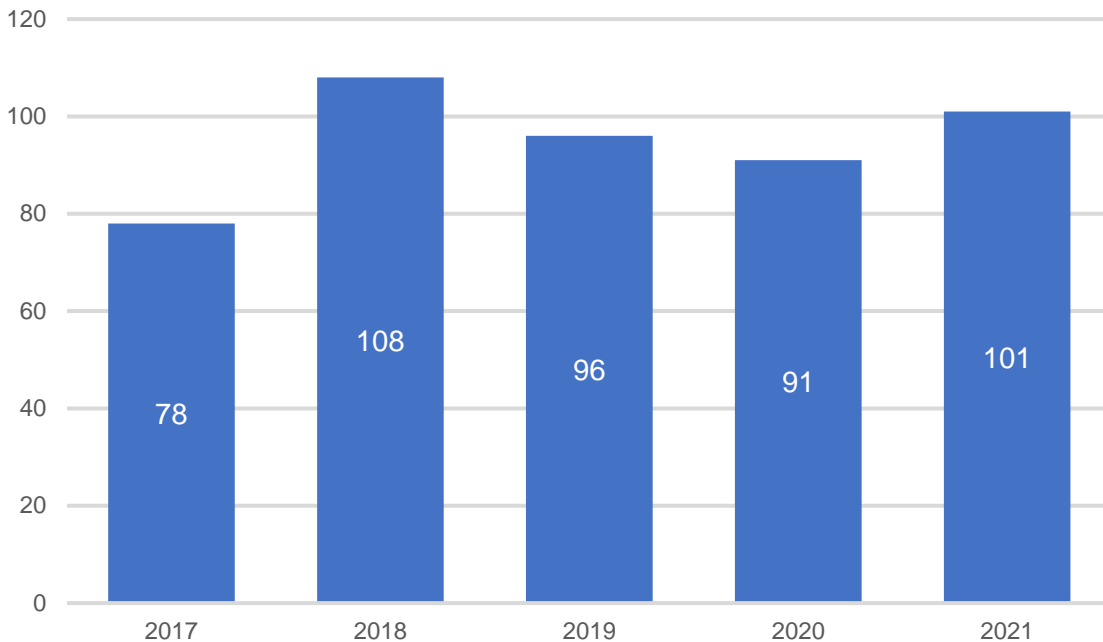
Figure 3: JTC Attendance by Year



External Engagement

Each year the Old Colony MPO engages members of the region on a number of different planning initiatives. Some of these initiatives in 2021 were Road Safety Audits at Multiple Locations, the Resilient Transportation and Climate Adaptation Summit, and the Active Transportation Study to name a few. With such planning studies, public engagement is necessary to understand how the public feels about a project or initiative. In 2021, OCPC conducted and directly engaged in 101 external public engagement activities. These external engagements ranged from hosting virtual Road Safety Audits to attending Select Board meetings to present on traffic safety studies such as Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion Zones. In previous years (before COVID-19), all external engagements were held or conducted in person such as meeting directly with business associations like Brockton's Downtown Business Association. A good portion of the engagements in 2018 and 2019 were related to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The fluctuation in engagements over the previous five years is the result of the number of projects and initiatives in which the Old Colony MPO conducted or was involved. Since March 2020, all of the MPO's engagements have been held virtually with the exception of the June 2021 MPO Meeting, at which the signatories attended the meeting in-person while all other attendees attended virtually.

Figure 4: External Public Engagement by Year



Engagement of Protected Classes

The MPO takes every effort to make sure individuals that come from traditionally underserved communities are a major part of the public participation processes. Before COVID-19 when all engagements were held in person, all public outreach event notices were translated into the four Limited English Proficiency (LEP) languages for the MPO’s region using the Title VI Safe Harbor Clause. These four languages identified using the Safe Harbor Clause are Haitian Creole, Spanish, Portuguese, and English.

As previously mentioned, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, all external engagements have been held virtually, thus eliminating the need to mail out meeting documents beforehand and provide printed materials at the engagements. Since March 2020, the Old Colony MPO has continued to be prepared to provide any materials for any engagements in any language requested. However, the MPO has not received any requests for translations of documents in 2020 or 2021 so there is no data to present. Should we have any requests for translation requests, they will be documented in future reports.

Other services and resources that the MPO provides is the Old Colony Planning Council website can be translated into 109 different languages and the newsletter can be translated into 49 different languages. Per federal regulations, the Title VI Notice of Protection is included on all agendas which the Council hosts and is also on the website. For anyone who needs to file a Title VI complaint, the process is explained on the Title VI page on the OCPC website and has the phrase “If this information is needed in another language, please contact the MPO Title VI Coordinator at 508-583-1833 ext. 202” provided in 12 languages. The Title VI webpage can be found at http://ocpcrpa.org/title_vi.html for more information.

Correspondence

The Old Colony MPO utilizes several different media to communicate with members of the public about current planning invites, upcoming outreach events and the release of public documents for a period of review and comment. The methods of correspondence span a wide range, from standard sources like the OCPC website and newsletter to social media such as Facebook and Twitter. As times have changed, the MPO relies more on social media platforms to engage members of the public and is always looking for new tools to keep the public engaged. For example, all public meetings like the MPO meeting and the JTC meeting notices are published on OCPC Facebook page and Twitter account. Since the beginning of COVID-19, OCPC has ceased the traditional method of mailing printed copies of agendas and notices for meetings and events as sending the notices via email and the newsletter were faster and more convenient. In 2019 (the last full year of utilizing mailings for notices), there were 3,600 direct mailings sent out for just the JTC and MPO meetings, not including other meetings and events that OCPC hosted.

Digital

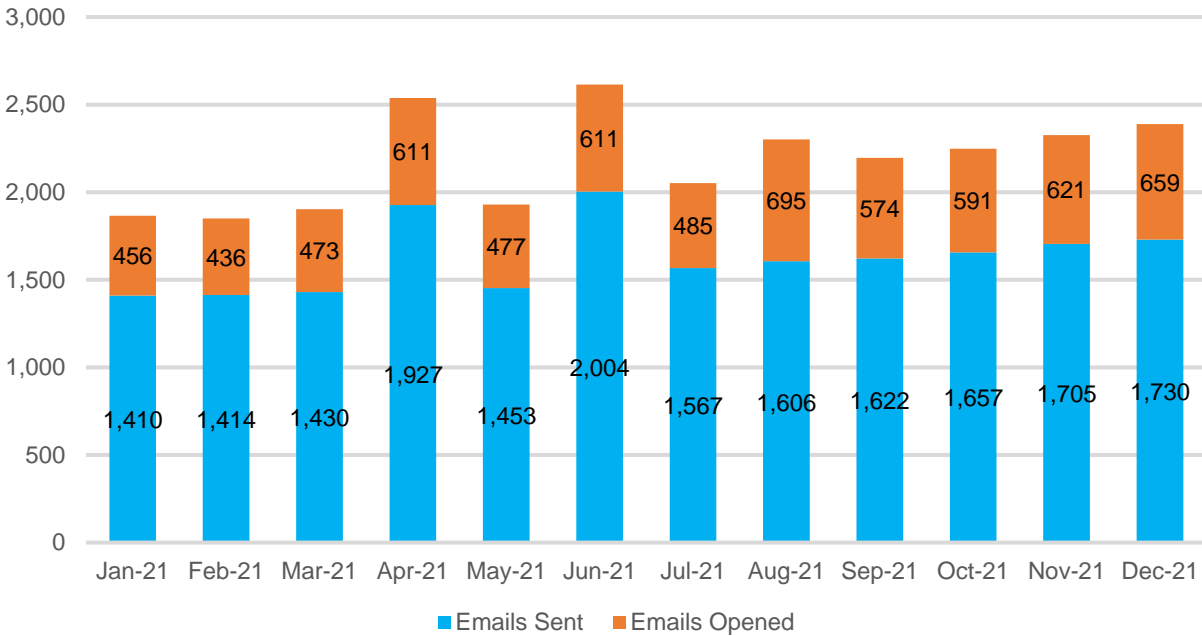
Digital correspondences, such as email and social media, are readily used by the Old Colony MPO in its outreach activities. Email is the primary method of communication used by MPO and is employed to send out meeting notifications and to respond to members of the public about MPO activities when utilized for public outreach purposes. Along with email, the MPO has establishing a strong social media presence. Currently the Old Colony MPO uses three different types of social media platforms in its outreach efforts. These three social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. It is through these social media platforms the MPO seeks to raise awareness about its initiatives at a time when so many things are competing for people's attention. Also, the MPO seeks to get younger people involved in MPO activities and sees social media as the way to do it since this cohort tends to get most of their information through these platforms.

Email

The Old Colony MPO sends out large number of emails every year as part of its public outreach efforts. In 2021, the MPO sent over 4,140 emails to inform members of the public and their officials of planning initiatives being conducted by the MPO. Contained in such emails are meeting flyers, agendas, and additional information about who they should contact if they have any questions. Additionally, the MPO also solicits feedback from members of the public on publicly released documents such as the TIP and LRTP for which they can email in their comments and recommendations.

In 2020, OCPC started producing an organizational newsletter that is sent out to our 17 communities, partner organizations, and stakeholders. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform the reader about what is currently happening at the Council. The newsletter touches upon recently released documents, grant opportunities, and other relevant information the Council believes our partners should know about. During 2021, OCPC sent out a total 19,525 newsletters and 6,689 (34%) were opened and read by the receiver. These numbers were higher than 2020, with 12,081 newsletters sent and 3,606 (30%) opened and read. The two total amounts for newsletters was calculated by multiplying the number of recipients by the number of newsletters. June 2021 was the month with the most newsletters sent with 2,004, and August had the most newsletters opened/read with 695 as well as the highest open rate with 43%.

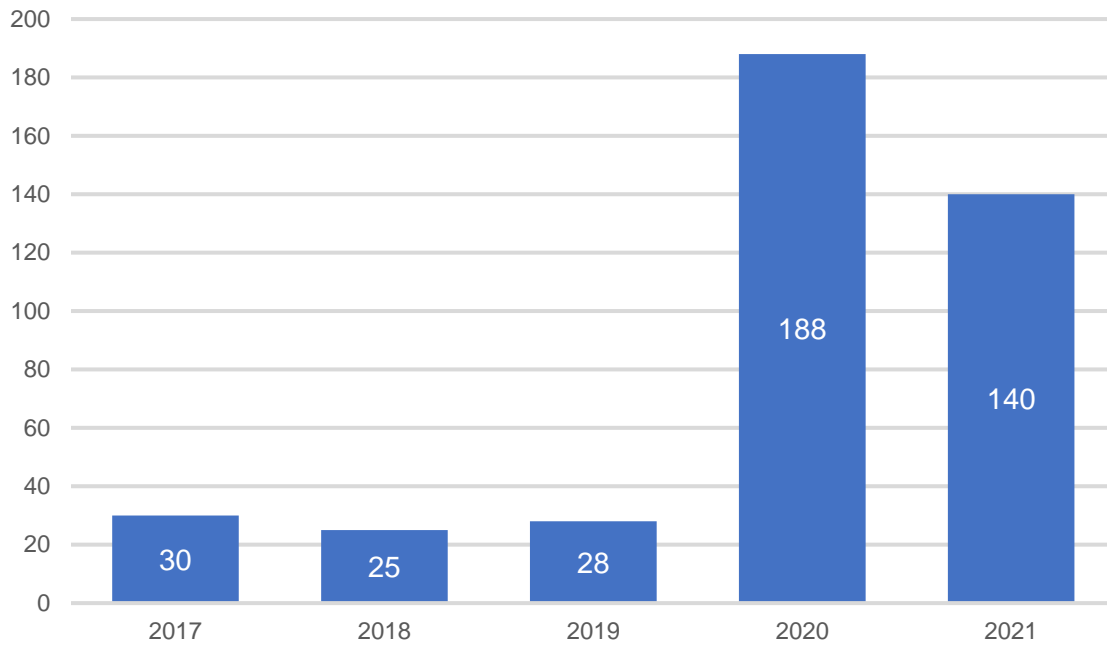
Figure 5: OCPC Newsletter by Month



Social Media

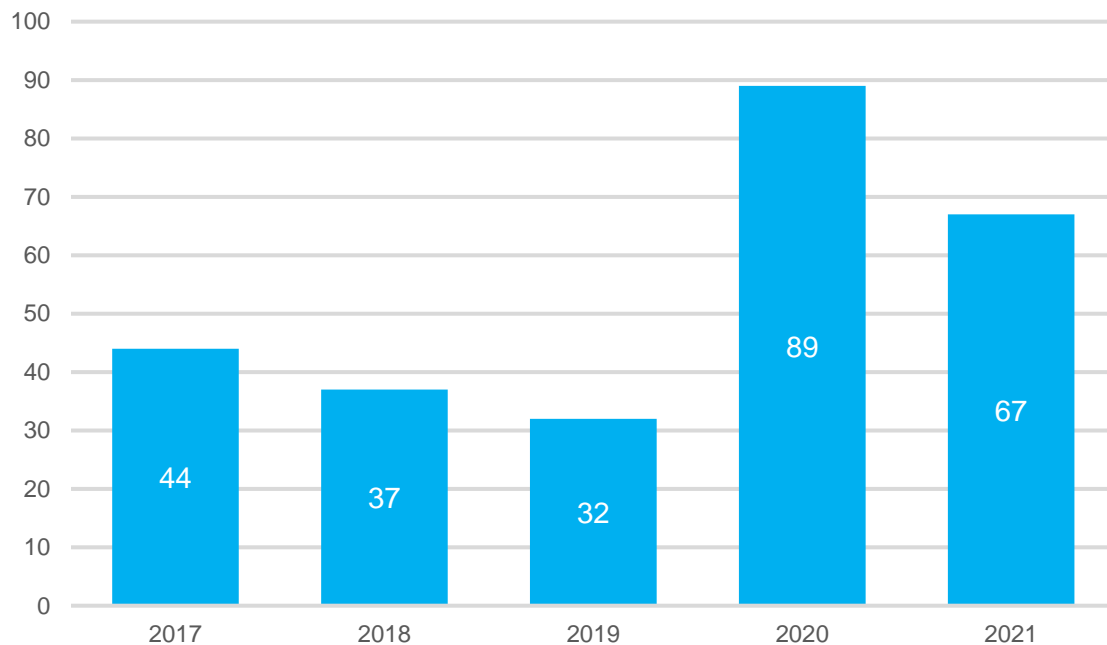
Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have become a larger part the Old Colony MPO’s go to for dissemination of public outreach notifications, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the MPO made 140 Facebook posts about public engagement events along with other regional and Commonwealth initiatives, which was 48 fewer than 2020, and those posts yielded 13,738 impressions (likes, reactions, comments, and shares). The use of Facebook by the MPO has dramatically increased over the last two years. This increase in Facebook utilization has to do with the number of projects needing a public participation component and some project requiring a higher degree of public engagement such as the Long Range Transportation Plan, but also to have an additional platform to conduct outreach for the Council. Going forward the MPO sees a continued increasing usage of Facebook as a platform for public engagement.

Figure 6: Facebook Postings by Year



The MPO uses Twitter to send out information on upcoming outreach events, the release of public documents for review, and to disseminate other regional information to members of the public. Last year in 2021 the MPO sent out 67 Twitter notifications which yielded 15,700 impressions. Twitter impressions convey how many times a tweet has been viewed, retweeted, or liked. The use of Twitter by the MPO is down from the previous year but is the second highest when observing the last five-year period, similar to Facebook.

Figure 7: Twitter Utilization by Year



YouTube has been one of the social media platforms that historically has not been fully utilized by the MPO. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the MPO had only uploaded two informational videos which yielded 107 combined views. During COVID-19, businesses and organizations turned to Zoom to have their meeting, both internal and external. The benefit of using YouTube is that it gives members of the public a chance to see a presentation on a project or other planning initiative if they cannot make a public meeting. The Old Colony Planning Council has expanded the utilization of its YouTube channel and uploads videos for public meetings and engagements that it hosts. In keeping with this desire to use YouTube more, the Old Colony MPO uploads videos on a regular basis, including public meetings (e.g., monthly JTC and MPO Meetings), public engagements regarding UPWP Projects (e.g., Road Safety Audits and Resilient Transportation & Climate Adaptation Summit), as well as specialized videos (e.g., the Logo Launch video and a Happy Holidays video, the videos with the most and second most views last year respectively).

Over the course of 2020 affected by COVID-19, YouTube usage had increased as the MPO has been conducting public meetings online with the use of tools such as Zoom the online virtual meeting platform and it continued in 2021. In 2020, 14 videos were posted with a total of 420 views and 2021 saw 64 videos posted with a total of 1,021 views. Compared to 2020, 2021 had more than four times more videos with over twice the number of views. The two videos that yielded the highest number of views were the Logo Launch video with 238 views and the Happy Holidays video with 181 views.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Calendar years 2020 and 2021 were great years for increased attendance at public engagements as well as increased utilization of OCPC's social media accounts.

The Old Colony MPO is diligent in its efforts to engage members of the public, especially those from underserved communities and populations. Using a multiprong approach to public engagement, the MPO has sought to bring more individuals and organizations into the planning process. However, despite the efforts to move the needle and increase public participation, participations rates have fluctuated over the last five years, with a recent spike in the previous two years due to virtual meetings. This fluctuation in public participation stems from the number of projects happening each year and the public appetite to participate which seems to be waning due to competing priorities and interest.

With the movement towards public participation taking place virtually on platforms like Zoom due to COVID-19, the MPO has seen public participation increase. The addition of virtual meeting platforms is something the Old Colony MPO plans to continue using to provide greater access to members of the public and organizations to participate in public meetings even after COVID- 19 has passed. Allowing people to attend public meetings from the comfort of their homes or their offices seems to be a valuable tool going forward for the MPO to increase participation in the planning process.

After reviewing MOE Reports from the Hillsborough MPO¹ and the MPO and Planning Council for Pinellas County², OCPC will look into the following recommendations to increase attendance at

¹ <https://planhillsborough.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MOE-Report-FINAL.pdf>

² <https://forwardpinellas.org/document-portal/public-participation-plan-evaluation-report/?wpdmdl=47524&refresh=622a161db08731646925341&ind=1613089511723&filename=Public-Participation-Plan-Evaluation-Report.pdf>

OCPC held events in the future as well as continue its desire to build more connections with underserved communities and populations:

- Increase live streaming options such as Facebook live or public tv broadcasts
- Utilize short videos to inform with less attention commitment
- Use local radio to inform public of upcoming events
- Optical character recognition and alt text images on web accessible documents for visually impaired users
- Work with human and social service agencies to identify issues and needs of underserved populations

These recommendations could yield better results for attendance and participation and can create and strengthen bonds with communities, populations, and organizations. OCPC looks forward to the future of this Report and hopes to have more on which to report in the coming years.