Title VI Report for October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021
Please include any goals for 2022 within the list of accomplishments/activities.

Genesee Transportation Council (GTC)

In the past year, GTC has continued to expand our community engagement practices, with particular emphasis on engaging people in our region protected under Title VI laws and orders. GTC's overarching policies and actions increasingly focus on making public participation methods usable for all people, as well as removing barriers. The following are highlights during the past federal fiscal year:

- GTC developed and submitted a draft *Title VI/Nondiscrimination Implementation Plan* to the NYSDOT Office of Civil Rights and is working to incorporate comments and finalize the plan in the coming months. The Plan includes a renewed Title VI Assurances document signed in December 2020 and Policy Statement describing GTC's commitment not to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, limited English proficiency, or income status when carrying out programs or activities conducted by the agency, its contractors, or subrecipients of Federal assistance.

- Appointed a new Title VI Coordinator to oversee the program.

- GTC adopted a new Public Participation Plan in February 2021 after an extensive virtual engagement process.

- A highlight of the 2020 year that was extended through 2021, was remotely engaging the public on core work products and assisting our planning study partners to maintain momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic.

  GTC conducted most of its public outreach using the PublicInput.com Integrated Community Engagement Software, procured in April 2020 and renewed in April 2021. This web-based software system provides a platform to manage the public engagement process to host virtual public meetings and offering options for all people to participate in projects and programs.

  There are several key features related to equity:
  - Built-in language translator
  - Ability to create unique emails and text messages for each project
  - Options for people to access the audio portions of online public meetings with a telephone and toll-free phone number, speak with the project team in real-time, leave recorded voice message at any time in any language
  - Options for people to access and participate in the meeting with a home computer or mobile device by typing in the chat box or sending longer e-mails
  - Options for people to provide input via text to avoid charges related to using data or voice allotments

Additionally, GTC can collect and analyze specific demographic information for future outreach strategies including geo-targeted outreach and a dynamic database that grows with every interaction.

About a dozen UPWP projects have progressed in this reporting period and sought input to identify conditions and needs, or to present recommendations using a variety of outreach platforms. GTC assisted seven project teams to conduct virtual outreach using PublicInput.com. Consulting firms used other virtual meeting tools on the remaining projects.

- In April 2021, GTC added the *Equity Mapping Tool* to our license with PublicInput.com. This tool provides custom mapping layer overlays sourced from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) EJSCREEN which helps us plan outreach efforts and publish reports that demonstrate our engagement in Environmental Justice communities including Limited English Proficiency, Low income, Minority, and Education levels.

  EJSCREEN is a geospatial tool that utilizes census data to define Environmental Justice (EJ) community boundaries, as well as communities that have been historically disenfranchised. The tool allows us to directly compare our public participation maps with this information to measure the equity and reach of our efforts directly within our PublicInput dashboard for individual projects or over the long term. The participation maps are available to export, as well as to be embedded in reports built in the dashboard to demonstrate outreach. The data provided in the Equity Mapping Tool is continually synced with the American Community Survey (ACS.)

- In August 2021, the GTC Board adopted the *Genesee-Finger Lakes Region Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update.* FTA requires that a Coordinated Plan must be developed "through a process that includes participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human service transportation providers, and other members of the public." The update also compares demographic information, available services, and assessed needs to conditions observed during previous plan development to best note trends and identify potential future needs and service gaps.

Areas of Specific Interest:

Public Outreach and Participation

- Social Media: In the past year, GTC has increased its presence and activity on Twitter and Facebook to regularly share information of interest, to cross-promote outreach opportunities for member agencies, to promote safety campaigns, and to share significant travel advisories, as well as to encourage discussion on relevant topics of transportation planning. We are engaging with organizations and publications that serve traditionally underrepresented groups. Also, in the past year we have been tracking analytics to measure effectiveness. The Facebook page geo-targets information to populations covered under Title VI. We have used paid features to boost social posts to reach people with Facebook or Instagram accounts in our region.

- Paid Advertising: GTC purchased a display ad in the Black History Month edition of the Minority Reporter publication to publicize the opportunity to participate in the Long Range Transportation Plan 2045 process.

- GTC has entered the second year of a contract with PublicInput.com, an integrated public engagement web-based software platform to manage outreach efforts. While online engagement has led to dramatic increases in participation overall, there continues to be a need to provide more traditional/offline options to supplement every initiative.

Through the PublicInput platform, every survey can be converted into text message format, language can be translated through a built-in translation tool, and comments can be collected via email, text, online, or with a voicemail inbox. During public meetings, the public can access the audio portions of online public meetings with a toll-free phone number, speak with the project team in real-time, leave recorded voice message before or after a meeting in any language. People can access and participate in the meeting by visiting the meeting website on a home computer or mobile device using a standard web browser without having to download and learn any separate video conference platforms. By facilitating this broad range of synchronous and asynchronous formats, people of every educational and socioeconomic background, as well as members of the workforce who are unable to attend meetings during traditional timeframes are given the freedom to participate. To ensure understanding of the diversity and equity in our engagement, GTC can collect volunteered demographic information and compare to census data or environmental justice maps to inform future outreach strategies including geo-targeted outreach or community-based partnerships

- In August 2021, GTC partnered with the Village of Perry, Wyoming County, to conduct public outreach on a transportation plan. In planning, we discovered that according to the US Census, there is a high number of people who are over age 64 and under Age 5 in portions of the village. In response, the project team provided chairs and coloring activities and noted such in the publicity efforts. Furthermore, the outreach event was held in the parking lot of popular grocery store and easily accessible.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- All public meeting locations are ADA accessible. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most meetings were held remotely with the ability to participate via various methods without the need to travel from home. Virtual meetings included real-time closed captioning, were recorded, and archived, and transcripts are available.

- GTC has relationships with organizations that can provided interpreters for a variety of language, including ASL, for our meetings. Upon request, GTC will provide services for anybody to participate in our projects and programs despite physical abilities. There were no special requests during the reporting period.

- The GTC webpage www.gtcmpo.org is accessible for all users, including those who use screen readers or other aides in full compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 790). The website has a built-in option to enlarge text, website language translation (utilizing the Google Translate tool for literal translations of individual pages.)

The site is also mobile-friendly which helps reach many lower-income individuals who do not have access to a personal computer but do use a smartphone to access the internet. GTC continues to make opportunities for public input known through the website and posts products from completed plans and studies.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

- *Linguistic isolation* is one of the six demographic indicators accessible in the Equity Mapping Tool on our software system. Data shows percent of people in a block group living in linguistically isolated households. A household in which all members aged 14 years and over speak a non-English language and speak English less than "very well" (have difficulty with English) is considered linguistically isolated.

- All meeting announcements include an offer to arrange for services for all people to participate despite proficiency in English. No requests were made this reporting period. As noted above, our PublicInput.com platform includes language translation and transcription of all text, surveys, and livestreamed videos. People can view and comment in their native language with translation to English for integration into our public engagement archives. The GTC website also allows for language translation.

Environmental Justice (EJ)

- GTC staff regularly updates the stakeholder contact information noting human service organizations, neighborhood groups, etc. that work with, or serve, traditionally underrepresented groups within some aspect of transportation. We can share this information across our public engagement platforms to ensure full integration.

- In summer 2021, GTC fostered engagement with the Tonawanda Seneca Nation in Genesee County. We had a phone conversation with officials and accepted an invitation to visit and tour the territory in July 2021 to exchange information about transportation needs and transportation planning programs.

Data Collection and Analysis
The demographics analysis was conducted as part of the effort to update the *Genesee-Finger Lakes Region Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update*. It quantified and compared target population distributions within the region as well as to the entire State of New York and the United States. Contemporary data, referred to as the 2019 estimate, is sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2015 - 2019 five-year estimate at the block group scale.1 Comparisons to older data refer to the ACS 2007- 2011 five-year estimate unless otherwise cited. See the full Plan for more detail.

Document Review

During this reporting period, the following core working documents were available for public review and comment:

- *FY 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program* (UPWP)

- *Long Range Transportation Plan for the Genesee Finger Lakes Region 2045* (LRTP 2045)
- *Genesee Transportation Council Public Engagement Plan* (Public Participation Plan)

Staff Training

Throughout the reporting period, GTC staff participated in the following training:

- Managing Your Online Presence
- Virtual Public Involvement Workshop hosted by NYMTC and FHWA
- AMPO Virtual Conference
- National Association of Government Communications 2021 - Virtual Communications School
- JCensus 2020: Opportunities for Equity in Planning
- Various AMPO Public Involvement Working Group discussions
- Monthly NYSAMPO Public Engagement Community of Practice meetings
- USDOT Volpe Center 2021 Thought Leadership Series focused on ***Innovation for a Sustainable, Equitable Transportation System***
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training for the Leadship Team at RGRTA, our Host Agency

Complaints/self-monitoring

GTC has not received any complaints under Title VI during the reporting period.

Goals for next year (2022)

- Expand the use of our PublicInput.com platform to manage public outreach for both our internal work and our member agencies and transportation planning partners.
- Continue to monitor and maintain stakeholder lists and seek opportunities to engage with populations of interest.
- Adopt the updated Title VI Implementation and Nondiscrimination Plan.
- Seek further opportunities to engage with the Tonawanda Seneca Nation
- Seek further opportunities to engage with organizations that work with traditionally underrepresented populations.
- Participate in training opportunities to better understand how to conduct a more inclusive planning process.

GTC expects to develop and adopt the *FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program*. As part of the program development, GTC staff will conduct a screening of potential impacts on identified Environmental Justice areas. The draft program will be made available for a 30-day public comment period. Outreach to EJ areas will be a specific activity.