



Public Outreach for Update to MACORTS Participation Plan & Limited English Proficiency Plan

Comment Taken
February 22 - April 7, 2021

PARTICIPATION PLAN

MADISON ATHENS-CLARKE OCONEE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATIONAL STUDY



Prepared by:
ATHENS CLARKE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

In cooperation with:

Madison County Department of Planning and Zoning
Oconee County Planning Department
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration
Georgia Department of Transportation

Draft January 14, 2021

www.macorts.org

This plan shows how MACORTS interacts with the public during the transportation planning process.

Changes to MACORTS Participation Plan

- ❖ Removed reference to Oconee County Advisory Committee on Land Use & Transportation since it doesn't exist anymore
- ❖ Corrected all references to LRTP to MTP
- ❖ Clarified that administrative modifications are brought through 1 cycle of TCC / Policy Committee (document current process)
- ❖ Explicitly included virtual meetings for committee and public meetings as conditions require or at the pleasure of Policy Committee
- ❖ Explicitly stated that minutes & agendas are posted on the MACORTS website & that meeting recordings are available upon request (document current practice)
- ❖ Added more detail about how the public mailing list is used – hardcopy & electronic (document current process)
- ❖ Clarified that virtual meetings will be advertised in the same fashion as in-person meetings
- ❖ Presented details of how virtual public meetings work with all presentation & outreach materials on the website for the full public comment period
- ❖ Added criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of Participation Plan for virtual public meetings involving website traffic during public comment period vs. other times

Basic Components of the Plan

▶ Consultation

- ▶ Hardcopy & email mailing lists used - anyone can sign up for the mailing list via phone, email, website, or in-person
- ▶ Use newspapers, website, and direct mailings to reach people
- ▶ Work with State & Federal planning agencies & consultation list

Basic Components of the Plan

▶ Public Access

- ▶ All work done by MPO is shared on the MACORTS website (www.macorts.org)
- ▶ 15-day public comment periods for amendments to Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- ▶ 30-day public comment periods for update of MTP & TIP
- ▶ 45-day public comment periods for update or amendment to Participation Plan & Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan
- ▶ Administrative Modifications to MTP/TIP do not require public comment period, but do require going through one cycle of TCC & PC meetings
- ▶ Committee meetings schedule, agenda, & minutes posted on website
- ▶ Meeting recordings available upon request
- ▶ Virtual meetings may be held as needed or at discretion of Policy Committee - advertised same as in-person meetings

Basic Components of the Plan

▶ Public Outreach & Education

- ▶ Committee & Public Meeting agendas provided on website, media, & in mailings minimum of 3 days before meeting
- ▶ Press Releases, Newspaper ads, fact sheets, direct mailings, MACORTS website, & speaking engagements will be used to communicate with the public about MPO activities
- ▶ Website includes ability to translate each page into multiple languages, as needed
- ▶ Comments/Questions/General Information Requests can be submitted via the MACORTS website anytime

Basic Components of the Plan

▶ Public Input

- ▶ All work done by MPO is shared on the MACORTS website (www.macorts.org)
- ▶ Citizen members are included on both the TCC & Policy Committees
- ▶ TCC meetings include a public comment item on every agenda
- ▶ All TCC & Policy Committee meetings are open to the public and recordings of meetings are available upon request
- ▶ Hardcopy and digital comment sheets are used during public comment periods. E-mails are also acceptable.
- ▶ Surveys are used to gather information about the effectiveness of the public participation process
- ▶ Virtual and/or in-person public meetings are held when necessary
- ▶ 15, 30, & 45-day public comment periods are held for MPO products
- ▶ Administrative Modifications to MTP/TIP do not require public comment period, but do require going through one cycle of TCC & PC meetings

Basic Components of the Plan

▶ Evaluation of Participation Plan

▶ Factors Examined for Evaluation:

- ▶ Surveys are used to gather information about the effectiveness of the public participation process during each public comment period
- ▶ Website Traffic
- ▶ Number & Type of public comment received
- ▶ Concerns voiced by citizen representatives about outreach
- ▶ Number of people attending public meetings
- ▶ Qualitative factors examined by MPO staff

Analysis of Effectiveness of Recent Virtual Operations & Comment Periods

- Attendance of Committee meetings (Better Attendance with Virtual Meetings)
 - TCC Voting Members Attendance 2019 (in-person meetings) = 10-12
 - TCC Voting Members Attendance in 2020 (virtual meetings) = 11-14
 - PC Voting Members Attendance 2019 (in-person meetings) = 5-6 (average: 5)
 - PC Voting Members Attendance in 2020 (virtual meetings) = 5-6 (average: 6)
- Attendance of Public to Virtual Meetings = 0
 - More phone calls than normal (anecdotal evidence)

However, we are connecting with the people:

- Website Traffic During May – September 2019 = 3531 (same period as TIP Amendment & Draft MTP public involvement)
- Website Traffic During May – September 2020 = 4090
- Website Traffic During 2020 Public Comment Periods on Public Involvement Tab Specifically
 - May 26 – June 9 (3 bridges; UGA) = 478
 - June 22 – July 6 (SR10Lp@Lex) = 517
 - August 24 – September 22 (MTP Amendment; TIP) = 658

Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study
(MACORTS) & Athens-Clarke County Transit Department

Limited English Proficiency Plan

Draft January 14, 2021

Prepared by Athens-Clarke County Planning Department



2021

This plan shows how MACORTS & the Athens-Clarke County Transit Department (ACCTD) work to ensure that those who have limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English get the help they need to access and use our services.

Limited English Proficiency Plan

- Updated Every 3 Years
- Purpose of LEP Plan: Ensure accessibility to programs and services to otherwise eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language

Four Factors to Formulate an LEP Plan

In determining how to provide effective and meaningful access for LEP customers, the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has established the following four guidelines to consider in determining “reasonable steps” to be taken by MACORTS and Athens-Clarke County Transit Department:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible service population,
2. The frequency with which LEP persons encounter the services, programs, or activities provided,
3. The nature and importance of the services, programs, or activities; and
4. The resources available to the program and the costs of providing interpretation/translation services.

Who are
the people
in the
service
area of
MACORTS
& ACCTD ?

Table 1 - Total 'Speakers' by Race Age 18 & Over

Census Source	Race	Athens-Clarke Co.	Madison Co.	Oconee Co.	Oglethorpe Co.	Jackson Co.	Total
B01001A	White	68,232	7,606	22,461	3,955	5,897	108,151
B01001B	African American	25,722	1,231	1,365	705	825	29,848
B01001C	American Indian	138	11	6	9	0	164
B01001D	Asian	4,311	123	1,070	0	38	5,542
B01001E	Hawaiian / Islander	83	0	0	0	5	88
B01001F	Other Race	2,022	304	90	133	57	2,606
B01001G	Two or More Races	2,440	68	321	51	43	2,923
B01001I	Hispanic	8,620	559	1,072	334	305	10,890
	Total	111,568	9,902	26,385	5,187	7,170	160,212

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, B01001A-G & B01001I, 5 year Average 2014 - 2018, Sex by Age by Race

Who are the people in the service area of MACORTS & ACCTD ?

Table 2 – Top Ten Languages Spoken in MACORTS Region

5 yrs and over Population	176,455	
English	153,464	86.97%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	13,811	7.82%
Other Indo-European	2,122	1.20%
Chinese	1,907	1.08%
Other Asian/Pacific Islander	1,067	0.60%
Other & Unspecified	785	0.44%
Korean	763	0.43%
German	653	0.37%
Arabic	507	0.29%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	455	0.26%
Total	175,534	99.48%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-yr Estimate: 2014 - 2018; C16001 – Language Spoken by All Ages

Table 3 – Top Ten Languages Spoken in Athens-Clarke County

5 years and over population	117,825	
English	99,947	84.83%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	10,828	9.18%
Other Indo-European	1,546	1.31%
Chinese	1,362	1.16%
Other Asian/Pacific Islander	746	0.63%
Other & Unspecified	746	0.63%
Korean	694	0.59%
German	511	0.43%
Arabic	491	0.42%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	274	0.23%
Total	117,145	99.42%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-yr Estimate: 2014 –2018; C16001 – Language Spoken by All Ages

Factor 2 Analysis - Frequency of Interactions with LEP Persons

Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP persons encounter the services provided.

To date, MACORTS has had very little contact with LEP persons in the course of MPO business. Athens-Clarke County Transit Department (ACCTD) has more contact with LEP persons due to the nature of services provided and number of persons with whom the staff interacts with on a weekly basis, but the percentage is still quite small. ACCTD and MACORTS planning staff were surveyed in regards to their interactions with LEP individuals in an average week. The MACORTS staff have had no requests for assistance from LEP persons in the last 15 years. Anecdotally, MPO staff noted only interacting less than 5 times in the last 20 years with LEP individuals during the course of their public interactions or day-to-day business. The remainder of the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department staff, who are housed with the MPO staff, indicated that they encounter an average of less than 2 LEP persons per week per planner. The office-wide total was 12 LEP customers encountered of the 256 customer interactions for the week surveyed (4.7%). Usually, these people bring another person with them who speaks English to assist them, according to the survey. Table 6 shows the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department number of customers and the number of LEP persons on an annual basis. LEP individuals make up approximately 4.7% of the customers annually.

Table 6 – Limited English Proficiency Customers of Athens-Clarke County Planning Department

LEP Persons Per Week	Extrapolated LEP Persons Per Year	Total Customers Per Week	Extrapolated Customers Per Year	Weekly Percentage LEP Customers	Annual Percentage LEP Customers
14	728	256	13,312	5.47%	5.47%

Additional Notes: This data came from a survey of employees of the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department. They were asked how many LEP persons were encountered in an average week. This office handles zoning, land use and plans review. The MPO, MACORTS, is administered out of this department. The number of customers per year was extrapolated from a survey of total customers during the week of September 21 – 25, 2020.

Table 7 – Limited English Proficiency Riders of Athens-Clarke County Transit Department

Bus Rts	Average Annual Number of LEP Riders	2020 Annual Ridership	LEP Annual Percentage	Bus Rts	Average Annual Number of LEP Riders	2020 Annual Ridership	LEP Annual Percentage
1	52	68,847	0.08%	20	52	122,895	0.04%
2	104	52,390	0.20%	21	208	33,562	0.62%
3	0	26,653	0.0%	22	0	24,489	0.0%
5	52	98,877	0.05%	23	0	2,521	0.0%
6	0	102,148	0.0%	24	364	50,337	0.72%
7	520	71,072	0.73%	25	104	80,874	0.13%
8	208	82,330	0.25%	26	52	47,055	0.11%
9	52	53,046	0.10%	27	104	141,855	0.07%
12	0	161,637	0.0%	28	0	21,092	0.0%
14	208	79,965	0.26%	30	104	16,426	0.63%
Any / All*	96			Total	2,280	1,338,071	0.17%

*Some drivers indicated that they drove different routes every day, so their responses couldn't be attributed to any particular route.

Who may need help and in what language ?

**Table 5 – Total Limited English Proficient Speakers
18 years of age and over By County & Language Group**

Language Group	Athens-Clarke Co.	Madison Co.	Oconee Co.	Oglethorpe Co.	Jackson Co.	Total
Spanish	2,768	245	254	158	0	3,425
Indo-European	86	0	0	0	81	167
Asian & Pacific	253	17	124	0	52	446
Other Languages	114	0	0	0	0	114
Total	3,221	262	378	158	133	4,152

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-yr Estimate: 2014 – 2018; B16004 – Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability

Results of Analysis of How Many LEP Persons Are In MACORTS Area & ACC Individually

**Table 4 – Total Limited English Proficient Speakers
18 years of age and over By County**

	Total Speakers	Total LEP Individuals	Total % LEP Individuals
Athens-Clarke Co.	102,948	3,221	3.13%
Madison Co.	9,343	262	2.80%
Oconee Co.	25,313	378	1.49%
Oglethorpe Co.	4,853	158	3.26%
Jackson Co.	6,865	133	1.94%
Total	149,322	4,152	2.78%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-yr Estimate: 2014 – 2018; B16004 – Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability

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Federal law provides a “Safe Harbor” stipulation so that recipients of federal funds can ensure with greater certainty that they comply with their obligations to provide written translations in languages other than English. A “safe harbor” means that if a recipient provides written translations in certain circumstances, such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient’s written-translation obligations under Title VI. The established threshold for the inclusion of a safe harbor for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5% of the service area population or 1,000 LEP persons, whichever is less.

Figure 3: Concentrations of LEP persons (18+ years of age) by Census Tract within the MACORTS planning area counties compared to regional totals

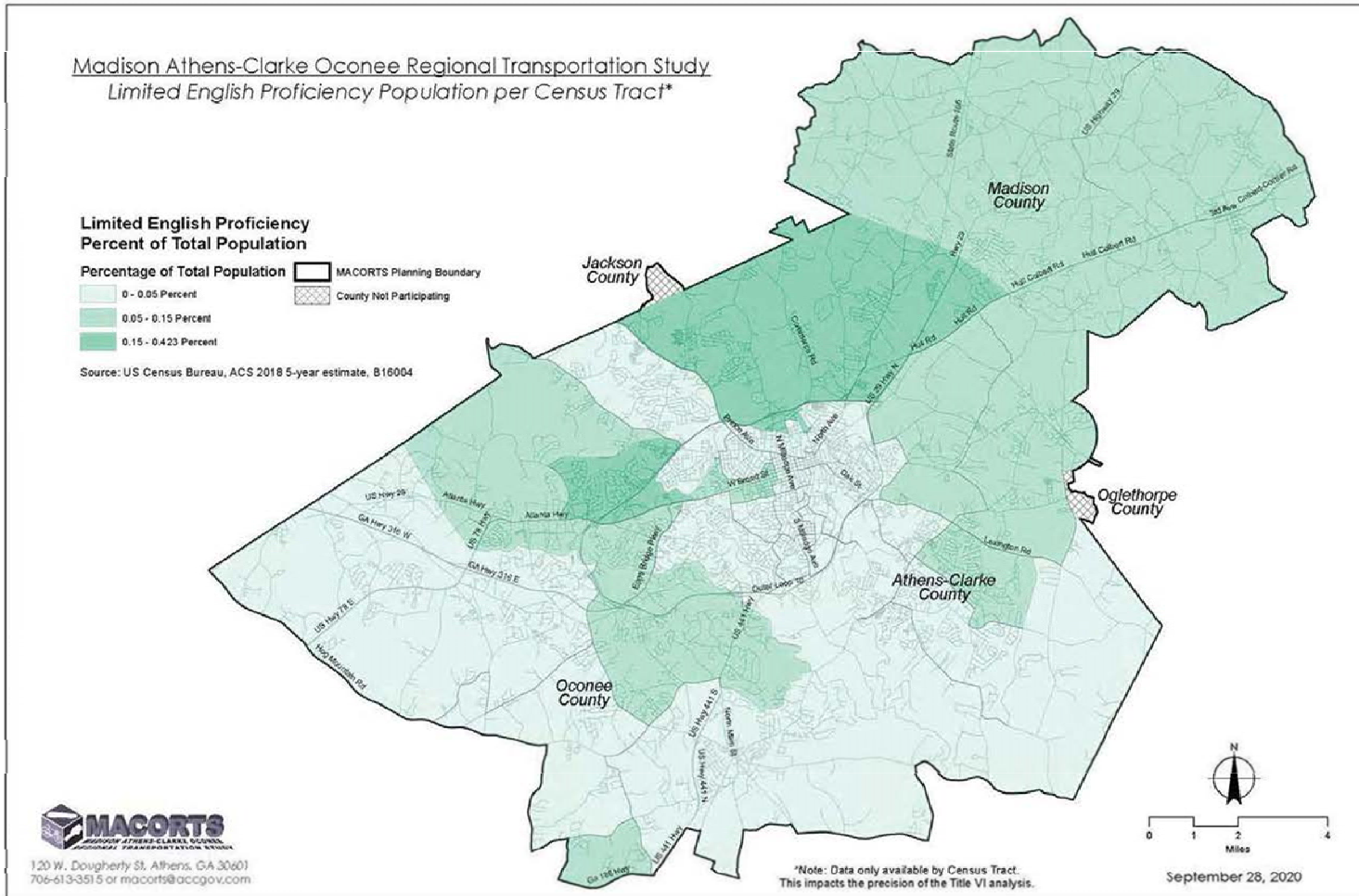
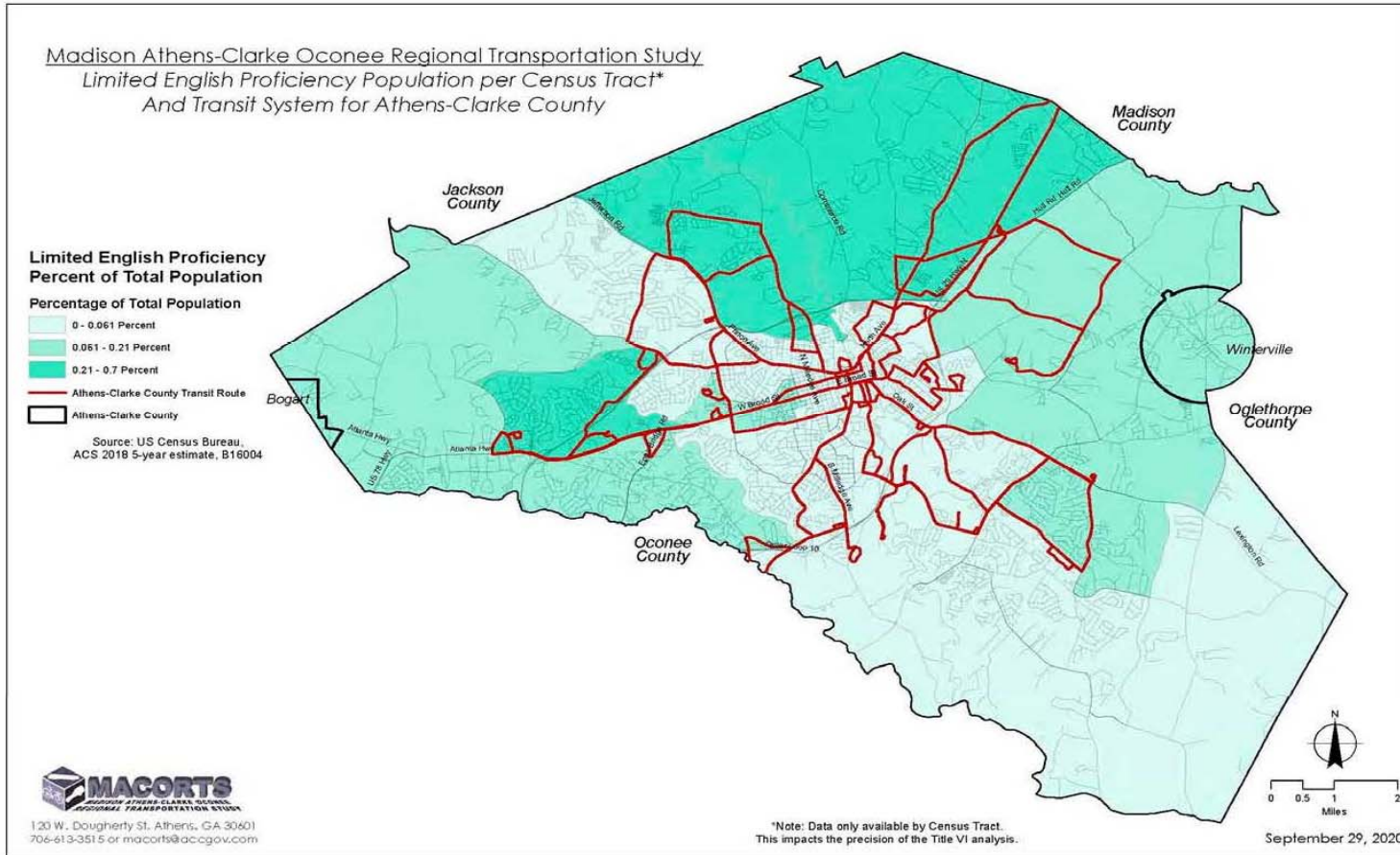


Figure 4: Shows the concentrations by Census Tracts of LEP Persons(18+ Years of Age) in Athens-Clarke County with Athens-Clarke County Transit Department System Map



What Does MACORTS Do for LEP Persons?

- ▶ MACORTS website is accessible in multiple languages
- ▶ Advertisements for Public Meetings in Spanish-language Publication (La Vision)
- ▶ Translation of Essential Documents, upon Request
- ▶ Provide Oral Interpreter at any meeting of MACORTS with advanced notice
- ▶ Use of Spanish-speaking Staff, when available
- ▶ Post Title VI Notices in English & Spanish on MACORTS website & at MACORTS Office

What Does ACCTD Do for LEP Persons?

- ▶ Provide Schedules & Route Guides in Spanish
- ▶ Provide Guide on How to Ride the Bus as Picture Book
- ▶ Advertisements for Public Meetings in Spanish-language Publication (La Vision)
- ▶ Translation of Essential Documents, upon Request
- ▶ Provide Oral Interpreter at any meeting of ACCTD with advanced notice
- ▶ Use of Spanish-speaking Staff, when available
- ▶ Post Title VI Notices in English & Spanish on MACORTS website & at MACORTS Office

What Does ACCTD Do for LEP Persons?

- ▶ ACCTD busses have on-board location announcements in English & Spanish
- ▶ Provide outreach to the local Hispanic Community
- ▶ Holds promotional events in Hispanic Community
- ▶ Provides monthly bilingual 'How to Ride the Bus' program in English & Spanish
- ▶ E-ink (tablet info mounted on bus shelters) displays have Braille instructions, Spanish capability, & read aloud options
- ▶ 'Token' application allows patrons to buy bus passes and use them from their phone in English & Spanish
- ▶ 'myStop' application provides route information in English & Spanish

Leave us your comments or send them to us before the April 7, 2021 Deadline.

- Email: macorts@accgov.com
- Mail: Athens-Clarke County Planning Department
Attn: MACORTS
120 W. Dougherty Street
Athens, GA 30601
- Fax: 706-613-3844
- Visit the MACORTS Website: www.macorts.org
- Drop off Comments at the Planning Departments in Athens, Danielsville, or
Watkinsville

Still Got Questions ? Get them answered:
Call Sherry McDuffie or Cherie Varnum at 706-613-3515
Email us at macorts@accgov.com

THANK YOU !!!