Alabama Metropolitan Planning Organization Planners Handbook

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Preface

The main purpose of this document is to provide the Transportation Planner with an overview of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Process. It is not inclusive, and many MPOs may choose to add other planning documents or will choose to have information presented in different ways. Hopefully it will guide a new planner through the process of drafting and publishing the documents required to properly run a credible MPO program. It will help more experienced planners to control the various documents and programs required by this process.

Several transportation planners from the Alabama Transportation Planners Association (ATPA) coordinated in the compilation of this document. This organization welcomes any recommendations to improve this document.

Section 1: Introduction to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)

The purpose of a Metropolitan Planning organization is to allow urban areas to plan and allocate scarce federal and other transportation funds appropriately. It allows urban areas that combine cities, counties, and states to analyze and coordinate their transportation needs to reflect the region's vision for the future. The MPO is needed to facilitate the collaboration of governments, interested parties and residents in the planning process. In other words, it is a process to ensure transportation funds are spent in a manner that has a basis in metropolitan region-wide plans developed through intergovernmental collaboration, rational analysis, and consensus-based decision making.

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962 required all Urban Areas with populations of at least 50,000 people to be designated as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and have a transportation planning process in order to be eligible for Federal funds. The premise behind the law is to allow these areas to cooperatively develop an integrated, intermodal metropolitan transportation system that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods and determine the optimal solutions for regional transportation needs. The complexity of transportation system problems, solutions, and the number of agencies involved all require an advanced level of coordination and cooperation among the stakeholders. The Act stated that the planning process was to be continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive. In addition the Act required all plans and programs produced from the process to be consistent with the comprehensive planned development of the area. Subsequent acts retained this language.

Organization

Each Metropolitan Planning Organization may select an administrative structure and voting procedures which best meets the needs and desires of its member governments and the surrounding communities. MPOs should have at least one committee which is comprised of elected officials, operators of the major modes of transportation and other interested agencies. This committee is referred to as the Policy Committee or the MPO Board and is the official decision making body of the process. The Policy committee is sometimes served by advisory committees which can include but not be limited to a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPC). A professional staff is in charge of coordinating, and compiling data as well as organizing meetings. More information on the committees can be found in Section 3.

Metropolitan Planning Area (MAA)

Metropolitan Planning Organizations are required to include the current Census Bureau-defined urbanized area and the area expected to be urbanized by the forecast year of the long-range transportation plan. This area is referred to as the Metropolitan Planning Area (MAA) or previously known as a "study area" and can also be expanded to include "regional economic development and growth forecasting areas." All MPO plans and programs are limited to the MAA.

Agreement

The first step in any transportation planning process is the development of an agreement between the agency hosting the MPO, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), the local governments and any other agencies. The agreement legally delineates the concerned governmental entities, defines the duties of each entity, and outlines the organizational structure.

Regulations

The joint Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration regulations regarding transportation planning were issued on February 14, 2007.* The regulations dictate the development of unified planning work programs, transportation improvement programs, and long-range transportation plans.

The MPO Planning Process

The MPO planning process provides information needed by the MPO board or policy committee to identify problems, evaluate alternative solutions and identify strategies for improving transportation system performance. In this way the area can best utilize the decreasing transportation dollars allocated to each area, by analyzing data and projects to prevent duplication, and develop an integrated, intermodal metropolitan transportation system that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods and determine the optimal solutions for regional transportation needs. Based on Federal regulatory guidance the MPO planning process must be **C**ontinuing, **C**ooperative and **C**omprehensive. This "3-C process" is designed to result in transportation plans and programs that consider all transportation modes and support community goals.

The 3-C planning process is defined by its attributes:

- **Continuing** indicates it is an ongoing, cyclical process. Plans are living documents which shows present conditions, procedures and developments as well as visions for the future. They should be reviewed and updated on a regular schedule to ensure accuracy.

- **Cooperative** means that regional transportation stakeholders should work together to define and develop the best strategies for the region. The regional stakeholders include Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), cities, counties, transit providers, Federal agencies and other interested groups. This insures that limited resources are utilized in the most efficient manner.

- **Comprehensive** programs and strategies should address all modes of transportation, all options, and both positive and negative impacts of an alternative. Regional issues are also stressed over individual agency issues.

MPOs must consider projects and strategies that will:

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.

Section 2: Products of the Transportation Planning Process

The three core products produced by a Metropolitan Planning Organization through the 3-C process are the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and the Unified Work Program.

Long-Range Transportation Plan

The long-range transportation plan (LRTP) reviews the present transportation system and analyzes future needs to outline transportation projects to fulfill the projected transportation needs. This plan should include a thorough review of all transportation modes, facilities and operations with an eye towards maintenance, effectiveness and cohesiveness. The plan will be completed every five years for those MPOs within air quality attainment standards and every three years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas.

Federal regulations require these plans should include:

- 20 year planning horizon
- Air Quality measures
- Conformity with Federal and State air quality regulations
- Freight and its impact
- Maintaining fiscal restraint
- Other transportation modes and their impact on present transportation system
- Present conditions
- Preservation of the existing transportation system
- Projected needs
- Public Involvement
- Routine update cycle of three or five years
- Strategies to address future needs

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a short-range plan composed of a prioritized list of transportation projects. The TIP covers a four-year period. Any capacity project on the TIP will be taken from the current long-range transportation plan.

The TIP is updated every four years. The TIP is financially constrained against expected revenue streams. The ALDOT uses the TIP when selecting projects for funding in the MPO area and in the development of the State Transportation Improvement Program. Again this document needs to show fiscal restraint, public involvement, and preservation of the existing system and confirm with Federal and State air quality regulations.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The annual MPO work program (known as the Unified Planning Work Program or UPWP in Alabama) represents the budget and work tasks necessary to accomplish and

maintain the transportation planning process within the metropolitan study area. The UPWP is developed to coordinate transportation and related planning activities for a cooperative, continuing, and comprehensive planning process.

The primary objective of the UPWP is the development of an integrated planning program that considers the planning activities of all transportation groups and coordinates these activities to produce a total transportation plan serving all segments of the population. The MPO updates the UPWP annually and is due to ALDOT no later than August 30. The main components include:

- Transportation planning tasks to be conducted by planning participants during a one year period
- Federally funded transportation planning studies, regionally significant planning studies not federal funded
- Schedule of activities
- Identification of responsible agencies and
- Identification of funding sources.

Public Involvement (or Participation) Plan

The MPO's Public Involvement Plan must define the public involvement activities a MPO will perform in the conduct of its urban transportation planning program inclusive of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program development or any other plans or major documents they develop. The Public Involvement Process and subsequent plan is explained in greater detail in Section Four.

Other important Plans

Issues such as Freight Management, Public Involvement, Air Quality, Congestion Management, Access Management, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be included in a Long-Range Transportation Plan, but many MPOs will compile separate plans to detail these planning processes. Some of these plans include:

Air Quality Control Plan

Non-attainment areas are the regions identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as exceeding National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Compliance with EPA air quality requirements is mandatory for non-attainment or maintenance areas. The essence of the transportation conformity is that, in non-attainment and maintenance areas, transportation plans and programs, which are financed wholly or partly with Federal-aid, will not further degrade air quality.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Many MPOs undertake a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to serve as a guide for improving bicycle and pedestrian activity in an MPO area. This plan may include present facilities, local laws and policies regarding bicycle and pedestrian travel. The plan should include maintenance of present facilities, construction, education,

promotion, and policy projects intended to integrate bicycle and pedestrian travel into the existing transportation environment.

The Bicycle Pedestrian Plan facilitates the development of the MPO's plans and programs. However, many of the proposed projects may fall outside of the authority of the MPO.

Congestion Management Plan

Traffic congestion is an everyday fact of life, and it's getting worse every day. Federal rules require that metropolitan planning organizations located in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) develop and implement a Congestion Management Process (CMP) as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process. A TMA is defined as an urbanized area with a population over 200,000 (as determined by the latest decennial census).

The CMP offers tools and methods for tracking transportation-system performance. It also serves as a planning tool to help manage traffic congestion and offers a set of multi-modal solutions for addressing the growing problem of traffic congestion in our region. Primarily, the CMP is a way to:

- Monitor, measure and diagnose the causes of congestion on a region's multi-modal transportation systems;
- Evaluate and recommend alternative strategies to manage or improve regional congestion; and
- Evaluate the performance of strategies put in practice to manage or improve congestion.

A Congestion Management plan should also develop:

- A Congestion Management Policy
- Transportation System Operations and Management Plans
- Project/Program Development, and
- Transportation System Data

The CMP makes extensive use of traffic modeling, GIS, analysis and other tools to determine congested segments.

Freight Management Plan

Even if the MPO does not compile a separate Freight management plan, freight is an important consideration in the Transportation Planning process. Those MPOs which have several large manufacturers, and or have significant intermodal freight connectors such as port or rail traffic contributing to the transportation system should seriously consider developing a Freight Management Plan. Effective freight movement is a key component of a region's economic competitiveness and the overall health and efficiency of a regional transportation system. A Freight Management Plan can help the MPO better understand the impact freight has on the area's transportation system. A freight planning program is designed to work with the freight

community in order to identify and coordinate both opportunities and strategies for the safe and efficient movement of goods to enhance the region's economic vitality. Establishing and maintaining these partnerships are crucial to the effective planning of freight transportation needs. One of the most difficult parts of a freight planning process is obtaining sufficient valid data to perform an analysis. Therefore, it is important for the MPO to establish and develop relationships with freight interests in the region that will aid them with integrating into the metropolitan planning process, educating them about current and upcoming MPO activities. Some items an MPO should consider when including freight systems in their planning are:

- Collection of base freight data that will support an ongoing regional freight planning function.
- Identification of specific freight needs and challenges facing the region.
- Development of transportation planning solutions addressing needs and facilitate efficient freight movement within, to, from and through metropolitan planning area.
- Prioritization of short, medium and long-term improvement projects. and
- Development of a regional consensus on the priority of freight related programs and projects

Prospectus

Many MPOs will develop a Prospectus or summary document. The purpose of this document is to provide an understanding and summary of the MPO process. It is intended as an educational tool for government officials and interested individuals. This document should provide a brief outline of the MPO, its activities, by laws and committee set up and membership.

Access Management

Access management is the careful planning of the location, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections. The purpose of access management is to provide access to land development in a manner that preserves the safety and efficiency of the transportation system. The MPO staff may facilitate and coordinate efforts for the area to draft a plan which ensures access management policies are consistent throughout the region. This type of planning is not normally within the expertise of a MPO planner and will rely heavily on inputs from city and county engineers of the MPO area.

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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Robert Bentley
Governor

John R. Cooper
Transportation Director

August 8, 2013

Ms. Terry Joseph, Executive Director
West Florida Regional Planning Council
4081 E. Olive Road, Suite A
Pensacola, FL 32514

Attention: Ms. Mary Robinson, Director of Transportation

Subject: Planning Documents

Dear Ms. Joseph:

In response to a request from Ms. Robinson, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is providing here the minimum Department requirements for formal draft and final planning document review and distribution copies from the West Florida Regional Planning Council. The listing includes six (6) current documents and four (4) future documents (Air Quality Conformity Process in 2016-17). We acknowledge the burden that is placed on the Planning Council in providing sometimes sizeable document copies, but we are constrained by both federal regulations and past practices from doing otherwise. The Bureau and Metropolitan Planning Section are making every effort to convert to electronic transmission wherever possible in order to limit the burden.

The following are the documents required for distribution:

Unified Planning Work Program
Long Range Transportation Plan
Transportation Improvement Program
Public Participation Plan
Congestion Management Plan
Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
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With Air Quality Conformity designation in 2014 or 2015, we would add these:

Amended 2040 Long Range Plan – Project Listings
Amended FY 2016 (or existing) Transportation Improvement Program – Project Listings
2016 (or monitoring year) Air Quality Conformity Report
Public Meeting Documentation for Air Quality Conformity (for all three documents)
.....

The above listings are subject to change by federal agency directive or ALDOT operational change. As we've indicated in previous correspondence, document ***drafts*** should be complete to the extent possible and include cover with appropriate titling and be designated as either *a draft or final.* Items should be dated, have tables of content, page numbering, project listings, charts, maps, and Appendices.

The following is a truncated version of the earlier email copy requirements:

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
Finals – fifteen (15) hard copies.
Formal Amendments – single copies of amended pages and fully executed Resolution.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
One draft CD modeled network in Cube Voyager.
Finals – fifteen (15) hard copies.
One CD Final modeled network in Cube Voyager to the attention of Steve Williams, our office.
Administrative Amendments – amended pages, letter by TPO Chairman, executed Resolution.
Formal Amendments – drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs. Finals – fifteen (15) hard copies.

Project Priorities
No review. One (1) final Project Priorities document for file. *[Note: MAP-21 mandates that TIP projects be prioritized within the TIP. The TPO may want to consider suspending the Project Priorities document in favor of an extended TIP review process.]*

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
New TIPs:
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
Finals – fifteen (15) hard copies.
Amendments:
Administrative Modifications - only if they are specific to Lillian or Orange Beach, AL. For those, single copies of the amended pages, approval letter by the TPO Chairman, and executed Resolution.
Formal Amendments – drafts - ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs. Finals – fifteen (15) hard copies.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
Finals – Fifteen (15) hard copies.
Amendments - Minor adjustments to the PPP will not be reviewed.
Formal Amendments (TPO vote and Resolution) – drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs. Finals – fifteen (15) hard copies.

Congestion Management Plan (CMP)
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
Finals – Fifteen (15) hard copies.
Amendments – No review.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
Finals – Fifteen (15) hard copies.
Amendments – No review.
.....

Air Quality Conformity Process:
The following are submitted individually for review. Finals are published as a set.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Amendment [Project Listings only.]
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
Finals – Fifteen (15) hard copies.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment [Project Listings only.]
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
Finals – Fifteen (15) hard copies.

Air Quality Conformity Report
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
Finals – Fifteen (15) hard copies.

Public Meeting Documentation for Air Quality Conformity – *Amended 2040 Long Range Plan, Amended FY 2016 Transportation Improvement Program, and the 2016 Air Quality Conformity Report.*
Draft reviews as described in the earlier email.
Drafts – ten (10) hard copies and three (3) CDs.
Finals – Fifteen (15) hard copies.

If you require further information or assistance regarding the above documents, please call Jim Doolin at 334-242-6097 or email at doolinj@dot.state.al.us.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Jilla
Multimodal Transportation Engineer

by: _____
Dr. Emmanuel C. Oranika
Metropolitan Transportation Planning Administrator

RJJ:ECO:vj
c: Bill Couch – ALDOT
Jim Doolin – ALDOT
Victor Jordan – ALDOT
Clint Andrews – FHWA – Alabama
Jim DeVries – FDOT – Pensacola Liaison Office, Milton
FL-AL TPO 2014 file

Section 3: Committees

The MPO Area transportation planning process is conducted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The staff of the MPO may be hosted in the designated city, a regional council or county commission. The Policy Committee (or MPO board) is the official decision making body of the process. The MPO can be comprised of other subcommittees which serve the Policy committee to include: a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPC). These committees may have different names, but ultimately they serve the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee has the ultimate decision on transportation planning matters but the advisory committees' work and recommendations shape all of the outputs of the transportation planning process.

Each MPO must establish bylaws to cover its function, including designation of the MPO's membership and voting representation. The MPO voting membership is determined by consensus of local governments to choose who should be members of the Policy committee. Federal regulations require membership of local elected officials, officials of public agencies administering or operating major modes of transportation, and appropriate State officials. The MPO policy or board should periodically reexamine its voting membership to ensure the established MPO structure is consistent with Federal and State requirements. Such shifts may be triggered after a census, local government boundary change or other changes in population. Bylaws should include organizational structure of the Policy and any advisory committees, membership of advisory committees and who should participate in these committees. Bylaws should also include meeting times and minimal agenda items.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee/Board is required by regulations and serves as the official decision making body for the MPO transportation planning process. In this capacity the Committee determines how federal transportation funds are spent in the study area. The Committee's responsibilities include providing overall guidance to the planning process, review and approval of all process plans and programs. The Policy/Board may appoint TCC and CAC subcommittee members as outlined in the bylaws. The Policy Committee should meet at least twice a year or as often as necessary to ensure the correct and timely compilation and/or amending of core documents and to complete actions necessary to ensure the process is completed in a timely manner. Many large MPOs may find it necessary to meet on a monthly basis.

The Policy Committee may choose to have several sub-committees to advise them on different subjects of the Transportation Planning process. Although they are not required by regulations, these committees serve as useful tool in determining needs and analyzing data required for a viable Transportation Planning process. These committees can include, but not limited to:

Technical Coordinating Committee

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) provides technical support to the MPO Policy Committee. Members can include State and local engineers, planners, public works offices, alternate transportation mode owners and operators and universities or other schools. Some MPOs include representation from major employers, military bases, Indian Tribes, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or other interested agencies. The TCC members review the planning process products from a technical perspective making certain that all appropriate concerns are addressed, including local planning issues, engineering details, environmental questions, and future growth, among many others. The TCC reviews and analyzes MPO documents, studies, reports, plans, and programs and provides the MPO with recommendations concerning these items. The TCC also has the ability to make alternative recommendations for any of the products.

The TCC coordinates the work of the various departments and agencies involved in the transportation planning process. Members share information and data to build and improve the planning processes and products. The TCC members also all coordinate plans and projects to ensure that all projects are carried out in a cohesive, efficient manner and are compliant with Federal and State regulations and laws.

Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)

The MPO relies on the public to participate in the transportation process in response to public notices of meetings distributed through printed, spoken and social media. However, there are a number of problems with public involvement in meetings of this nature, with the biggest drawback being the lack of participation. Another shortcoming is the background knowledge that is required to understand the planning process. While the MPO staff should try to make the process easy to understand, transportation planning is not usually taught in school and is not widely understood. People are not familiar with the topic and therefore are not willing to participate. One solution to this problem is to permanently appoint Citizens to provide a non-planner's perspective into the planning process. Appointed members should represent the area's racial, ethnic and gender population characteristics as much as possible.

In this manner, the CTAC provides the MPO with a standing committee of citizens who have a good knowledge of the planning process and can pass on public concerns related to transportation in a structured fashion. The CTAC reviews MPO documents, studies, reports, plans, and programs and provides the MPO with recommendations concerning these items. The CTAC also informs the MPO of public concerns related to transportation projects and issues. Committee members act as liaisons in the community gathering opinions and ideas in their everyday life and passing the information on to the MPO.

In addition to the CTAC, the MPO should adopt a public involvement plan. The plan describes the MPO's public participation goals and lists strategies to encourage

public participation in the transportation planning process. The CTAC is included as one of several methods to garner public involvement.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

Another committee which can be a good tool for transportation planning is a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. The committee can be comprised of professional planners, avid walkers and bicyclists or individuals from the community who share a common interest in improving bicycling and walking in the MPO area. This committee assists the MPO by providing a unique perspective in the development of plans, programs, and projects related to bicycle and pedestrian activities.

Section 4: Public Involvement Process, Environmental Justice and Title VI

Public Involvement Process

The following regulations apply to the Public Involvement Process:

Title 23 United States Code (USC) 134 and 135 – 23 USC 134 is codification of the law establishing planning policy, defining MPO organizational structure, and delineating MPO and State responsibilities in the transportation planning process.

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) – This is the most recent transportation legislation, signed into law by President Obama in July of 2012. This law amends, modifies, and adds to existing 23 USC 134 and 135. The language specific to the participation process is found in 134(i)(6) Participation by Interested Parties.

23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450 – 23 CFR 450 is FHWA/FTA interpretation of 23 USC 134 and 135, providing specific requirements and actions for MPOs and the state implementing agency, the DOT. The applicable language for both is found, respectively, in 450.210(1)(i and others) ("… the state shall..") and 450.316(1)(vii and others) ("..the MPO shall..").

Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC 2000d, et seq. 42 USC 2000d prohibits exclusion from participation in any federal program on the basis of race, color, or national origin. This is the seminal or shaping expression of the law.

23 USC 324 – This is the law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, adding to the landmark significance of 2000d. This requirement is found in 23 CFR 450.334(1).

29 USC 794 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973.) - This is the law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of a disability, and in terms of access to the transportation planning process.

Clean Air Act- A series of acts aimed at reducing smog and air pollution, the most recent of which is the Clean Air Act Extension of 1970, with amendments in 1977 and 1990. The 1990 amendment established the State Implementation Plan (SIP), under which the states are obligated to notify the public of plans for pollutant control and allow opportunities for input into the process.

Executive Order 12898 – Executive Orders by the President as the head of the Executive Branch typically carry the weight of law. This is not actually true unless the order has been given discretionary power through an Act of Congress, or a later act gives congressional weight to the order. Significant orders by Presidents in the past affect the ability segments of the population to gain access, and in this case, access to the planning process. Order 12898, often simply called "Environmental Justice," requires federal agencies to identify "disproportionately high and adverse human and health environmental effects of its programs on minority populations and low-income populations…" and prohibits actions that would adversely affect a disproportionately

high number among these populations. Section 5-5 addresses the public involvement part of the order.

The Alabama Open meetings act, Act Number 2005-40 ("Sunshine Law") outlines procedures that support the right of the public to attend meetings of governing bodies and governmental agencies, boards, commissions, and institutions which expend or appropriate public funds. This law states that notices of meetings should be publicized at least 7 days for regular meetings. It also prevents the use of electronic media to circumvent the goal of an open meeting. According to this law, the date, time and location of the meeting along with a preliminary agenda (if known) should be included on these notices. Notices must be displayed on a bulletin board convenient for public viewing. Notices should be mailed to the media or special interest groups. This law also explains meeting, voting and recording procedures. The full version of this act can be found at: http://www.acca-online.org/oml/OpenMeetingsLaw.pdf.

When we involve the public, it improves the transportation planning process and fulfills a shared vision for the future of the community. It increases value of a project, improves safety, efficiency, protects natural and human environments and contributes the community vitality. Lack of public involvement can waste millions of taxpayers' dollars on unwanted and unneeded projects.

Public involvement is one of the fundamental principles of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA extensively employs public involvement to make sure the public has an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Public involvement also is important to NEPA in that it helps to ensure all the social, environmental and economic impacts of a project are considered.

Public involvement is also a critical element of the MPO planning process. Federal law and regulations require each MPO to adopt a proactive public involvement process. This process should include early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and programs. Planners should develop and maintain a set of contacts to include the media and organizations who work with low-income, disabled, seniors or other traditionally underserved groups. These groups should be contacted every time the MPO meets or has a public review of a document.

The MPO's Public Involvement Plan must define the public involvement activities a MPO will perform in the conduct of its urban transportation planning program inclusive of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development or any other plans or major documents they develop. The initial public involvement process should have a 45 day public review prior to being adopted by the MPO board or policy committee.

Federal requirements for the public involvement process includes:

- Providing timely information to citizens, affected public agencies, transportation agencies, private providers or transportation, affected community segments,
- Providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information used to develop plans and programs
- Requiring adequate public notice of public involvement activities,
- Demonstrating explicit consideration of comments,
- Seeking out and considering needs of traditionally underserved populations,

- Including summary analysis and report on disposition of comments received in the final document,
- Providing additional opportunity for comment if the final is substantially different from the original draft circulated,
- Reviewing the process periodically for effectiveness,
- Reviewing Federal agencies help assure full and open access to decision making, and
- Coordinating with the statewide public involvement process.

It is important that the public involvement efforts be flexible, broad-based and inclusive. This is best accomplished by developing a formal, documented public involvement plan (PIP) or Public Participation Plan (PPP) early in any planning process that identifies stakeholders and provides a variety of outreach methods and forums for input. In general, a successful public involvement effort is based on the following basic actions:

- Begin early
- Carefully identify potential stakeholders
- Be flexible
- Identify the needs and desires of interested and affected parties
- Develop trust and credibility among stakeholders
- Solicit information and ideas from affected stakeholders
- Openly share and exchange information and ideas related to the project or a particular design or alignment,
- Ensure that all state and Federal regulations relevant to the project are met, Reach agreements cooperatively by discussing, consulting, coordinating, and negotiating issues and areas of disagreement related to the plan, program, or project, and
- Improve or adapt the final delivered project to better meet the needs and desires of the public, agencies, individuals, and groups affected.

The Alabama Department of Transportation requires the development of a Public Involvement/Participation Plan.

Environmental Justice and Title VI

Environmental Justice requirements flow from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which describes intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination, and the February 1994 Executive Order amplified provisions of Title VI. Title VI information can be included in the PIP. These requirements should be reviewed and followed during the update of the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.

A close examination of Environmental Justice and Title VI is required prior to expending any Federal funds. MPO processes must assure that transportation plans, TIPs, and projects do not result in “disproportionally high and adverse” effects on minority or low income populations. A review of environmental justice issues requires examination of disparate harm on specific groups, and whether these groups are actively engaged in the decision making process. The planning process must analyze and assess the regional impacts of transportation system investments for different socio-economic groups. This process should include a demographic profile identifying the locations of low-income and minority populations, an assessment of the financial distributions and conditions across these groups, and public involvement activities

aimed at engaging minority and low-income populations in the transportation decision making process.

The Public Involvement process must identify minority and low-income groups within the MPO area and identify specific activities to engage these populations. The goal of this process is the equitable distribution of benefits and proportionate distribution of negative impacts.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan

The purpose of this plan is to document how the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) integrates people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) into the transportation planning process. The MPO, as the official decision-making body of the transportation planning process, determines how federal highway and transit funds are spent. This plan includes an assessment of the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population and how the MPO will address the potential needs of this population.

Laws and Regulations

Entities that receive federal funding must follow Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d. The Act states that no person shall "on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." To strengthen Title VI, Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, was issued on August 11, 2000. The order requires federal agencies that distribute financial assistance to non-federal entities to publish guidance detailing how the non-federal entities can provide meaningful access to LEP persons. The U.S. Department of Transportation released their LEP guidance on December 14, 2005.

The U.S. Department of Justice, in their *Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons*, published a four factor assessment to determine a federal funding recipient's obligation to provide LEP services. The four factors are:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible service population
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 program
4. The resources available to the recipient and costs

The Department of Justice indicated that the analysis is intended to balance meaningful access for LEP people against imposing undue burdens on small local governments.

The Number or Proportion of LEP Persons Served or Encountered in the Eligible Service Population

The eligible service population figures can be taken from U.S. Census Bureau estimates for the MPO area, and the American Community Survey. The DOT recipient provides written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered. Since, The MPO plans how federal transportation funds are used

in the metro area, the MPO's work affects every resident. However, the MPO does not usually provide direct, immediate, vital, or emergency service; such as medical treatment, meals, or shelter. Involvement in the MPO's transportation planning process is voluntary.

The MPO may provide interpreters and translation service as their budget allows. The MPO can use free websites and programs whenever possible to translate correspondence and documents. In-person or telephone interpreters will be utilized as needed. If volunteer interpreters are not available, the MPO will pay interpreters as their budget permits. The MPO staff will maintain a list of local interpreters (volunteer and for-pay) and a list of acceptable telephone interpretation companies. The staff will also maintain a list of websites and programs that translate text and documents. The MPO staff will refer to the lists as needed. The lists are available upon request. The MPO staff will refer LEP callers to the MPO's website where instructions will be available to translate the website to their language. On the website will also be directions to request free language support from the MPO.

The MPO may do the following to notify LEP people of the availability of language services:

- Post a sign at the reception desk in the most common languages
- Add a statement to the MPO website in the most common required languages
- Add a statement to the title page of all major MPO documents in the most common languages
- Provide handouts at all MPO meetings in the most common languages
- Add the information to all MPO presentations

Section 5: The Long-Range Transportation Plan

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is the single most important and time consuming product that a transportation planner will undertake. It indicates present conditions and the direction the region will be taking in transportation system investments. It provides the MPO committees, planners and the community a way to assess present transportation systems, envision goals and visions for the future, and then it uses statistics, data, planned projects and input from the community to plan strategies to arrive at the vision. It provides focus and vision to enable planners to gear proposed transportation projects towards the desired results.

The LRTP is required at least once every five years or every four years in Air Quality non-conformant or maintenance areas. Maintaining this plan is a continuing process and a good planner will initiate and maintain accurate and timely databases at all times. The plan identifies the multimodal and intermodal transportation policies and facilities needed to meet the MPO's travel demand for a 20-year planning horizon. The plan should include both short and long term strategies designed to produce an integrated transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.

Federal Requirements:

The following regulations apply to the Long-Range Transportation Plan:

- Title 23, United States Code Section 134(g)
- 23 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450.22
- Title VI of the Civil rights Act of 1964
- Executive Order 12898
- Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and,
- 40 Code of Federal Regulations parts 51 and 93

The Federal MPO Transportation Plan requirements include the following:

- 20 year planning horizon
- Short and long range strategies
- An update at least every four years for air quality maintenance areas, and every five years for other areas
- Consideration of planning factors
- Approval by the MPO
- Projected demand on the transportation system over the planning period,
- Congestion and management strategies with a systematic approach to current and future demand,
- Congestion management system used in project prioritization (TMAs only),
- Pedestrian and bicycle transportation facilities,
- Sufficient project detail to permit conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas) and cost estimates
- A multi modal evaluation of major investment impacts; transportation, socioeconomic, environmental and financial,
- Corridors and subareas identified for further study,

- Land use plans, development objectives, housing strategies, community development and employment plans, overall area social, economic, environmental, and energy conservation goals,
- Transportation enhancement activities,
- A financial plan demonstrating consistency of proposed transportation investments with available and projected sources of revenue,
- Public official and citizen involvement in accordance with an adopted public involvement process, formal public meeting, and publication, and
- Conformity determination in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas.

While the U.S. Department of Transportation does not need to approve the MPO Long-Range transportation plan, in air quality non-attainment or maintenance areas, copies are distributed to Federal Agencies for their use in determining MPO Transportation Improvement Program consistency with the Transportation Plan. Also Federal law requires an Environmental Justice analysis of improvements included in the LRTP for their impact or disproportionate harm on Low-income and minority populations.

Alabama Department of Transportation Long-Range Transportation Plan Requirements

The following was taken from 23 CFR Part 450 with comments added by ALDOT (highlighted) in September 2009. Please read the unedited CFR for the complete content.

450.322 Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan

(a) no less than a 20-year planning horizon as of the effective date - ALDOT expects a 25 year plan from the date of adoption.

(b) include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system

(c) review and update the transportation plan at least every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years in attainment areas

(d) In metropolitan areas that are in nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide, the MPO shall coordinate the development of the metropolitan transportation plan with the process for developing transportation control measures (TCMs) in a State Implementation Plan (SIP)

(e) The MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall validate data utilized in preparing other existing modal plans for providing input to the transportation plan. In updating the transportation plan, the MPO shall base the update on the latest available estimates and assumptions for population, land use, travel, employment, congestion, and economic activity.

(f) The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include:
(1) The projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the transportation plan - As a minimum, ALDOT

requires a base year model, an existing -plus-committed model, and a plan model to be developed as part of the long-range transportation plan process. These models will need to be submitted to ALDOT for review and approval prior to completing the plan and as part of the final plan submittal.

(2) Existing and proposed transportation facilities (including major roadways, transit, multimodal and intermodal facilities, pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, and intermodal connectors) that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system,

(3) Operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities

(4) Consideration of the results of the congestion management process in TMAs that meet the requirements of this subpart

(5) Assessment of capital investment and other strategies to preserve the existing and projected future metropolitan transportation infrastructure - May be included in the financial plan.

(6) Design concept and design scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities in sufficient detail in nonattainment and maintenance areas for conformity determinations. In all areas (regardless of air quality designation), all proposed improvements shall be described in sufficient detail to develop cost estimates - Federal Highway Administration requires that only through lanes be listed in the project descriptions.

(7) A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities - FHWA also requires a discussion of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

(8) Pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 217(g) FHWA requires that any stand-alone bicycle or pedestrian project be described and be mapped using the same methods used for road projects. In addition, FHWA requires that all road projects include a description of what bicycle and pedestrian elements will be included or at least a statement that bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be a part of the road project. FHWA also requested that an ADA compliance statement be added to intersection improvement projects.

(9) Transportation and transit enhancement activities, as appropriate

(10) A financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted transportation plan can be implemented.

(i) the financial plan shall contain system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonably expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain Federal-aid highways and public transportation

(ii) the MPO, public transportation operator(s), and State shall cooperatively develop estimates of funds that will be available to support metropolitan transportation

plan implementation (reasonably expected to be available public and private funds)

(iii) In the case of new funding sources, strategies for ensuring their availability shall be identified.

(iv) must use an inflation rate(s) to reflect ‘‘year of expenditure dollars,’’ based on reasonable financial principles and information, developed cooperatively by the MPO, State(s), and public transportation operator(s)

(v) beyond the first 10 years, the financial plan may reflect aggregate cost ranges/cost bands - Not required

(vi) For nonattainment and maintenance areas, the financial plan shall address the specific financial strategies required to ensure the implementation of TCMs in the applicable SIP

(vii) the financial plan may (but is not required to) include additional projects that would be included in the adopted transportation plan if additional resources beyond those identified in the financial plan were to become available.

(viii) (If) a revenue source is subsequently removed or substantially reduced the FHWA and the FTA will not withdraw the original determination of fiscal constraint; however, in such cases, the FHWA and the FTA will not act on an updated or amended metropolitan transportation plan that does not reflect the changed revenue situation.

(11) The MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the transportation plan. Each MPO should follow their adopted consultation plan or policy.

(12) The metropolitan transportation plan should include a safety element that incorporates or summarizes the priorities, goals, countermeasures, or projects for the MPA contained in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan required under 23 U.S.C. 148.

(13) The MPO shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan Each MPO should follow their adopted public participation plan.

(14) The metropolitan transportation plan shall be published or otherwise made readily available by the MPO for public review, including in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web.

(15) A State or MPO shall not be required to select any project from the illustrative list of additional projects included in the financial plan

(16) In nonattainment and maintenance areas, the MPO, as well as the FHWA and the FTA, must make a conformity determination on any updated or amended transportation plan.

The Seven Federal Planning Factors

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

Development

Updating an existing MPO Transportation Plan

Once a Long-Range Transportation Plan is completed, a transportation planner almost immediately sets up developing the next one. Plans should include but not be limited to:

1. Developing the base year socioeconomic data
2. Developing the base year Traffic Model
3. Review/adopt Base year socioeconomic data and model
4. Review/adopt the study area
5. Review/adopt the functional classification system
6. Review existing transportation goals and objectives
7. Assess existing and future transportation conditions and needs to include:
   a. A level of service analysis of the system or its major parts
   b. A volume/capacity ration analysis
   c. Time/delay studies
   d. Origin/destination studies
   e. A review of traffic and accident data, a determination of the physical condition of system design factors
   f. Environmental factors and
   g. Identification of Environmental Justice populations
8. Identify solutions and alternative solutions
9. Identify projects to fit the goals and objectives and help satisfy needs
10. Develop a financial plan
11. Complete air quality analysis

12. Involve the public throughout the planning process
13. Send draft plan to Alabama Department of Transportation
14. Approve the draft and final plan

For those planners who complete their own traffic modeling, they must try to develop the Base Year Traffic Model within the first 18 months of the plan development. The travel demand model allows the planners to assess transportation needs, both current and future for all transportation modes. It is a system of mathematical formulas to generate travel patterns across alternatives. It is commonly used to analyze system wide congestion which aids establishing mobile air quality emission estimates. This includes updating socioeconomic data such as population, residences and business which is used in Land-use forecasting, an important part of traffic modeling. Land-use forecasting projects the distribution and intensity of trip generating activities in the urban area. In practice, land-use models are demand-driven, using as inputs the aggregate information on growth produced by an aggregate economic forecasting activity. Land-use estimates are inputs to the transportation planning process. **The ATPA plans to draft a separate handbook on the Traffic Modeling, which is too detailed and technical to be included in this document.*

The MPO planner may approach the development of this plan in several different ways. They may begin with a public involvement activity which would include all the members of the MPO committees to review the existing goals and objectives and to examine changing needs and conditions. Planners may also include parts of the plan development process in their normal planning schedule, so that committees can absorb and evaluate different parts of the plan in segment as opposed to trying to digest the entire plan in one sitting!

A sample LRTP schedule is as follows:

XXXX year Long-Range Transportation Plan - Schedule
Fiscal Year #1-2 **1.** Develop Base Year Socioeconomic Data - Fiscal years 1-2 **2.** Develop Base Year Traffic Model - Fiscal years 1-2 **3.** Review/Adopt Base Year Socioeconomic Data and Model - June **4.** Develop Vision Statement and Goals - July **5.** Review/Adopt Vision Statement and Goals - August **6.** Determine Study Area - September **7.** Check Functional Classification System- September
Fiscal Year #3-4 **1.** Review/Adopt Functional Classification System - October **2.** Conduct Freight Survey - Start October, Complete December **3.** Develop Socioeconomic Projections - November **4.** Review/Adopt Socioeconomic Projections - December **5.** Review Freight Survey Report - December **6.** Develop Existing Plus Committed Traffic Model - January **7.** Review/Adopt Existing Plus Committed Traffic Model - February **8.** Interview Non-Highway Modes - March **9.** Identify General Problems/Needs and Barriers (Current Conditions, Model Results, Engineer Reports, Freight Survey, Committee Input, Public Input) - March **10.** Review/Adopt General Problems and Needs - April **11.** Identify Strategies to address Problems and Needs - May **12.** Review/Adopt Strategies to address Problems and Needs - June **13.** Identify Projects that support the strategies (All possible projects - Projects will be divided between LRTP-Funded and Visionary Plan-Unfunded later in the process) - July **14.** Adopt Projects to support the strategies - August **15.** Develop Plan Traffic Models For All Projects - September **16.** Develop Financial Plan - September **17.** Develop Environmental/Social data sheets and maps - September **18.** Prepare Environmental Justice Report For All Projects - September
Fiscal Year 4-5 **1.** Review/Adopt Financial Plan - October **2.** Review/Adopt Environmental/social data sheets and Maps - October **3.** Review/Adopt Environmental Justice Report - October **4.** Select Projects Based on Financial Plan/ Environmental / Socioeconomic Review/ Environmental Justice Report - November **5.** Develop Final Plan Traffic Model - November **6.** Review/Adopt Final Project List - December **7.** Review/Adopt Plan Traffic Model - December **8.** Leave January-February clear for schedule problems - January-February **9.** Review/Adopt Draft Long-Range Transportation Plan - April **10.** Have Other Agencies Review Draft Plan - April - June **11.** Compare Other Agencies' Plans With Draft Plan - April - June **12.** Hold Public Meeting of Draft Long-Range Transportation Plan - May **13.** Review and respond to Public and Agency Input - June **14.** If necessary, modify Draft Long-Range Transportation Plan - July **15.** If necessary, hold additional Public Meeting - July **16.** Review/Adopt Final Long-Range Transportation Plan - August

Urbanized areas with populations of 200,000 or more are designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation as Transportation Management Areas (TMA). There are specific requirements for TMAs outlined in Federal regulations, including development of a Congestion Management system (CMS). A CMS identifies congestion in the region, specifies strategies to address it, and evaluates the impact of proposed improvements. This system is used as one factor in the process of evaluating alternative solutions and their funding.

Once transportation needs are identified, the planners should work with the committees to identify alternative solutions to those transportation needs. The MPO should look beyond capital project solutions to identify potential modal policy and administrative solutions to projected needs. Examples could include items such as access management practices, traffic signal timing and the encouragement of alternate transportation modes. Other approaches include a review of other MPO or transportation stakeholder creative solutions, a review of multimodal in intermodal alternatives and consideration of transportation management techniques and alternatives. Each alternative must also have a basic planning-level cost estimate.

The next step usually involves cost estimates. Current transportation funding from all sources within the region must be considered. Then using a 5 to 10 year trend, those funds should be projected to the end of the plan update. A second phase of the financial plan is the determination of funds needed to preserve the existing system (operation and maintenance) and efficiently use existing facilities. Generally, this is expressed in terms of funds projected to be available. The financial plan must demonstrate consistency of proposed investments with available and projected sources of revenue. The plan must be fiscally constrained, that is, the project cost for the first five years of projects should not exceed the amount of projected funding.

The financial plan must by necessity be evaluated with the alternative solution and project selection. The MPO must select a set of transportation alternative solutions to the projected needs and weigh each project against the projected funding. Evaluation criteria such as air quality conformity, regional distribution, congestion, road safety and implementation time frames must be considered. Alternatives may include recommendations on policies, programs, and projects. Each alternative in the set must include specific projects or programs with a cost estimate, realistic funding source, sponsor and timetable. The first five years of the plan update should include projects currently in the Transportation Improvement Program and those expected to be included in the next TIP. The set of alternatives may also include problem corridors or subareas identified as needing further study prior to identification of specific alternatives. In addition, the set of alternatives may include policy or program recommendations for other agencies.

Remember that Public Involvement is a crucial part of the planning process. The public should be encouraged to participate in all areas of a long range transportation plan development. In addition, it may be useful to have one or more Public Involvement meetings for the sole purpose of allowing pubic review and input into the finalized plan.

Air Quality

There are specific Federal air quality conformity regulations which apply to the Transportation Plan. These regulations stem from the Federal Clean Air Act amendments of 1990. The

legislation provides for identification of geographic regions of the country which do not meet clean air standards. These areas were designated as “nonattainment” areas.

A “maintenance area” is any geographic area of a state that originally was designated as in nonattainment, but subsequently was redesignated to attainment status subject to the requirement to develop and implement a plan to assure maintenance with Federal air quality standards.

Each State is required to develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP), which describes the strategies the State will implement in each area to reduce the pollution levels in sufficient amounts for the areas to meet and maintain National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

The Federal Transportation Conformity Rule ties together air quality conformity from the Clean Air Act Amendments and transportation programs. Accordingly, the transportation plans, programs, and projects for nonattainment and maintenance areas must demonstrate conformity with the SIP. The conformity process involves a quantitative analysis comparing estimates of the emission generated from vehicles on the area’s existing transportation system and on the system with proposed improvements. The MPOs covering designated counties are responsible for developing these programs. These programs include the Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Another activity which must be completed by those MPOs in non-attainment and maintenance areas during the development of alternatives is air quality conformity analysis. Once a draft set of alternatives is chosen, an analysis must be completed to ensure that an air quality conformity determination is possible. The initial set of alternatives may need to be revised to meet air quality requirements. MPOs within Air Quality Standards should evaluate plans and projects to ensure that they will not significantly contribute to lowering the area’s Air Quality standards.

Format and Content

Federal regulations and the Alabama Department of Transportation do not specify the format for the MPO Long Range Transportation plan. The MPO may format its plan to meet regional needs and desires. Federal agencies do not approve local plans, but do certify that it meets Federal and State regulations listed at the beginning of this section. Basic chapters of the plan must include goals and objectives, the plan development process, the methodology for assessing the existing and future transportation system needs, the prioritization process, a list of projects or set of alternatives, a financial plan, various modal options, bicycle and pedestrian concerns, an air quality conformity analysis, a status of corridor studies, compliance with Federal and State planning requirements, planning assumptions, public involvement and an Environmental Justice analysis.

Review Checklist for the Draft 2040 Long Range or Regional Plans

October 30, 2013

All MPO Planners and Directors:

The following is a summary of the known ALDOT, FHWA, and FTA requirements for the development of the Long Range or Regional Plans (LRTP/RTP) that will be subject to review by ALDOT's Metropolitan Planning Section. Much of what is included here is carried over from the Draft and Final 2035 documents, but a great deal has been added, and will continue to be during Draft 2040 development and right up to Final draft approval. Since the Department is still uncertain of the extent and direction of Performance Measures and Transportation Management Process reporting requirements, those components will need to be added as they are available. Additionally, there is uncertainty with regard to Air Quality Conformity impacts resulting from changes in the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, an EPA proposal for which is due in March of 2014. Depending on the timing of the announcement, the due date for non-conformity designation and final due dates for documentation, sections of the Long Range may need to be adjusted during draft status or amended shortly thereafter to accommodate those actions.

The U. S. Code (USC) and Codes of Federal Regulations (CFR) supporting Long Range Plan development continue to be 23 USC 134 and 135, as amended by MAP-21 Sections 1201 and 1202, and regulatory authority in existing 23 CFR 450, specifically 450.306, 316, and 322. Until we see additional regulations in the Federal Register, we will rely on the existing 23 CFR 450. These are augmented by other regulations that will be cited by section as topics are addressed.

Development of the Draft documents should *generally* follow those used for the 2035 and certainly for later amendments to that Plan. MPOs should be aware of format changes and document requirements added by ALDOT and federal agencies from 2008 to the present, and these changes should be passed to any consultants assisting the MPO in preparation of the Draft 2040. The review process for the Draft and Final 2040 will move more quickly if the consultant is fully aware of ALDOT and federal agency requirements. ***Please keep in mind that this summary is in broad strokes and subject to change, but the Department will try to keep the MPOs informed on a timely basis.***

Draft and Final document reviews will be conducted electronically by posting to the ALDOT FTP site to the extent possible. In a continuing effort to reduce costs, draft hard copies should not be sent to the ALDOT Metropolitan Planning Section at Central Office unless instructed to do so. For each MPO, within the FTP site, separate folders have been provided for both draft documents and draft network models and site access can be provided by ALDOT staff listed below. When placing items for review, notify the following by email:

For documents:
Jim Doolin at doolinj@dot.state.al.us, Victor Jordan at jordanv@dot.state.al.us, and Jenny Runions at runionsj@dot.state.al.us.

For models:
Jim Doolin at doolinj@dot.state.al.us, Steve Williams at williamsjs@dot.state.al.us, Bryan Fair at fairb@dot.state.al.us, Victor Jordan, and Jenny Runions.

Topics are in no particular order…

Long Range Transportation Plan/Regional Transportation Plan Format

The Long Range will be prepared in the **Outline** format, as is currently required for formal planning documents submitted to the Metropolitan Planning Section for review prior to distribution to Federal agencies. All currently approved formal documents, including the 2035 Long Range and subsequent amendments and updates, are in this format.

A completed Long Range Plan should consist of a narrative, a public participation record either included as part of the narrative or a separate document, and model-supporting documentation. Model support, depending on the relative size of the MPO, may require a separate document or documents. The Final 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan submitted for distribution must be addressed to Robert J. Jilla, P.E., to the attention of Emmanuel C. Oranika, PhD., to consist of paper hard copies and compact disks, the numbers of which will be determined by Jim Doolin in the Metropolitan Planning Section. The Final Plan will also include a compact disk (CD) of the *approved network model* marked 'Final 2040 LR Plan Network Model, Attention Steve Williams.'

In addition to the Outline format, the Long Range must include the following basic components. This is not a definitive list:

- Cover
- Title/contact page with Cooperating Agency Statement and USDOT disclaimer
- MPO Policy Board Membership
- MPO Advisory Committee Memberships
- Resolution
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Narrative Section
    - MPO Descriptive Information and MPA Map
    - Various Program and Project Information
    - Financial Plan and Funding Summaries
    - TIP Information
    - Administrative Modification and Formal Amendment processes
    - Bicycle Pedestrian Information
    - Public Transportation Information
    - Various Project Listings, Tables, Maps, Figures
- Appendices
  Terms and Acronyms
  Functionally Classified Map
  Livability Indicator Data Displays
  Limited English Proficiency compliance per FTA C 4702.1B and Language Availability Plans (LAPs)

Page numbering should follow the current convention for planning documents; lower case Roman numerals for the Introductory Section through the Table of Contents; and real numbers beginning with the narrative (1, 2, 3). The Executive Summary pages should be numbered beginning with *ES-1*. The Appendices should be listed A, B, C, D and so on.

As a general statement, we would expect the Long Range Plan to be a well-crafted and written document, with a minimal number of grammatical and usage errors. During the review process, we will make the statement that we will not review for such items unless they interfere with the

context and understanding of the document or the error is too egregious to ignore. Otherwise, there will be a review notation to the effect that an error exists, or awkward phrasing or whatever it may be, and it will be up to the MPO to correct it. The one exception to this policy will be in the language and wording of the Resolution, and we will make an effort to ensure the Resolution reads correctly.

Projects to include in the Long Range or Regional Plan:

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the short-range component of the Long Range Plan and development of that document requires it to be consistent with the Long Range Plan. Therefore, a discussion of necessary projects for the Long Range must necessarily consider those for the TIP.

The following projects should be in the Long Range:

- All *planned* projects, regardless of funding source
- All projects funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), either totally or in part
- All Federal Transit Administration (FTA) projects, funded either totally or in part by FTA and regardless of whether they represent funding actions, fixed guide-way projects, or other
- *Regionally Significant* projects (meeting the definition under 23 CFR 450.104), regardless of funding source [there are some exemptions under 450.324(c and d)] and whether capacity or non-capacity

Project Groupings and Tabular Data

ALDOT will continue the practice of segregating out the *Capacity versus Maintenance and Operations (M&O) projects*. Sub-groupings typically would be for Bicycle-Pedestrian projects, previous-year Authorized, Regionally Significant, listings by funding type or source, (i.e., CMAQ), Visionary (Needs) versus Financially Constrained (Cost Feasible), and Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) or Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects. There are a number of ways to display data, and some typical tabular data we would expect to see displayed in various tables are:

- Priority *numbering*
- Project sponsor
- ALDOT Comprehensive Project Management System (CPMS) ID number *(if applicable)*
- Map location references
- Termini description (if a road improvement)
  ALDOT will indentify inconsistencies in tables, maps, and links to modeled networks when found, but at minimum, the Functionally Classified roads and highways should always carry the designated route number when displayed.
- Secondary description (if applicable)
- Project length (if applicable)
- Exempt/non-exempt
- Number of lanes (before and after, if applicable)
  [Do not display odd-numbered lanes; use 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10]
- Construction, implementation, or applicable year
- Conformity analysis year(s)
- Phase or Scope (PE, UT, RW, CN, CE)
- Funding Program
- Funding Code(s)
- Description of work activity based on ALDOT-provided information

- Estimated cost in current dollars
- Year of Expenditure (YOE) dollars
- Federal share and local matching funds
- Roadway volume versus capacity (V/C)

Project Prioritization

The MPOs must prioritize projects in the Long Range and TIP document listings and tables. We would expect to see such listings in a numbered format (1, 2, and 3) in the Financially Constrained side of the Long Range. For purposes of the Draft 2040, however, FHWA has indicated they also expect the MPOs to make every attempt to extend prioritization to the *Visionary* side of the Plan. This may seem counterintuitive, as these projects may not have funding, or not be funded completely.

We expect the prioritization process to be difficult for some MPOs, as this will entail the Policy Boards reaching agreement on the order for constructing or implementing most projects in the Long Range. Still, this is the requirement and ALDOT will expect to see the MPOs make a good faith effort to comply.

MAP-21 mandates that projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (short-range component of the Long Range) be prioritized, or physically numbered in the desired order of construction or implementation. This represents codification of a procedure that some MPOs have been doing for several years and now is an actual requirement for the TIP. For TIP purposes, this means that projects displayed in tabular format will be numbered in priority order, regardless of listing type.

Note: ALDOT has not yet developed a replacement program for TELUS that will provide the numbering within the system, based on information provided by the MPO. The updated system is almost certainly coming, but for now, it must be done manually in tabular presentations.

General Mapping Requirements

Visionary (Needs) project listings must be displayed in a network map using contrasting colors to that of the Financially Constrained (Cost Feasible) network project maps. *This is a 2013 FHWA directive.*

All projects in the Long Range must be mapped, with the sole exception of Authorized Projects. The MPO may choose to include mapping of Authorized Projects for information purposes only.

Overall, while MPO project mapping has greatly improved over the recent years, we will be looking closely at the mapping for additional improvement. Items to review carefully prior to any draft submittal will include:

- Are ESRI ArcGIS applications in use?
- Large versus small scale area presentation
- Overall map detail
- Annotation
    - Place names
    - Route numbers
    - Inserted notes

ALDOT will indentify inconsistencies in tables, maps, and links to modeled networks when found, but at minimum, the Functionally Classified roads and highways, when displayed, should always carry the designated route number.

- Legend
- North Arrow
- Scale bar
- Notation *'Based on US 2010 Census data'*
- Presentation of sidewalk projects and community projects [prefer large scale]
- Presentation of transit service routes
- Map data presentation of Livability Indicators in maps, charts, or tables

Modeling

The modeled network, using Citilabs Voyager software, supports the planning projections and decisions discussed in the Long Range Plan. There should be a description and discussion of the MPO modeling efforts within the LR narrative. Data, maps, tables, and other documentation should be in a separate support document. *Smaller MPOs can place in the Appendices if able to do so*. The modeled network review process will focus on the following:

- Base Year 2010
- Functional Classification coding and links
- Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs)
- Existing + Committed (E+C) Networks
- Loaded Networks
- Link connectivity
- One-way streets and ramps
- Placement of centroid connectors
- Productions, attractions, and socioeconomic data
- Calibration and Validation
- Street names, aliases, route numbering
  ALDOT will indentify inconsistencies in tables, maps, and links to modeled networks when found, but at minimum, the Functionally Classified roads and highways should always carry the designated route number when displayed.
- ALDOT collected volume counts versus approved capacities *(2004)*
  The 2004 existing ALDOT capacities will be utilized for modeling the Draft and Final 2040 Long Range and Regional Plans. Development of an updated HPMS (Highway Performance Monitoring System) manual may allow for use of new capacity data in subsequent updates.
- Model produced volumes versus ALDOT volume counts
- Known or posted speeds versus model-generated speeds
- Air Quality Conformity Report and MOVES2010b model review (if applicable)
  ALDOT will review the Conformity Report, but will ***not*** *review MOVES estimate modeling other than to make sure it has been done based on the existing approved network model and is included within the Report. This is subject to change depending on the expected NAAQS proposal in March 2014.*

Steve Williams in the Metropolitan Planning Section will review all Draft 2040 Long Range models and provide guidance as needed***. (Please provide Steve with MPO base 2010 data as soon as possible.)***

The Long Range Planning process is not complete until the Section receives the compact disk of the **Final 2040 Long Range Plan Network Model** addressed to the attention of Steve Williams.

Project Funding Estimates and Year of Expenditure (YOE)

Project cost projections will continue to utilize ***current year dollar amounts*** factored by a four (4) percent per annum inflation rate. This procedure may produce some unrealistic cost figures in the out years, and this is anticipated. Projected funding amount totals should be expressed as ***Year of Expenditure (YOE)***.

Projects that are moved to out-years of the Long Range or the TIP must factor the inflation rate to arrive at the new out-year costs.

Financial *(Fiscal)* Constraint and the Ten Year Timeline

Financial Constraint describes a condition in which the MPO has the ability to pay for its projects. The MPO should be familiar with the definition provided in 23 CFR 450.104, where this ability is assessed in terms of *'…committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources…'* In areas of air quality nonattainment or maintenance status, TIP projects must be *available* or *committed* in the first ***two years*** of the TIP.

The Long Range Plan has a *minimum* twenty-year horizon. Unfortunately, funding resources are dwindling and will become even more difficult to find in the remainder of this decade and up to the next decennial. For that reason, and for the purposes of the Draft 2040, the Department and FHWA have adopted a strategy to maximize available funding over the life of the 2040 Long Range.

Every attempt must be made *to program MPO capacity project funding within the **first ten years** of the Long Range timeline.* ALDOT and the MPOs will need to program lane-adding and sizeable or complex infrastructure projects within that timeframe, and the remaining out-years will be confined to Maintenance and Operations and other types of projects, rather than the large scope capacity projects. If there are MPO questions regarding this strategy, call Jim Doolin at 334-242-6097.

Visionary, Financially Constrained, and the meaning of '*Reasonably Available'* in the Long Range Plan

In Financially Constrained terms, *'Reasonably Available'* derives from both 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i) and (ii), and the latter reads in part, '…resources from public and private sources **that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out**…' If the MPO, ALDOT, and FHWA are in agreement that the funding stream intended for a particular project reaches the *'reasonably expected'* threshold of 450.322, then the project may be moved from the Visionary to the Financially Constrained side of the Long Range and possibly even be programmed directly into the TIP.

We want to be certain this dynamic between the Visionary and Financially Constrained is understood in order for planners to better interact with Policy Boards, the Committees, and the general public. While the Visionary or 'Needs' part of the Long Range may consist of virtually any project, with or without funding, the Financially Constrained or 'Cost Feasible' side ***must identify that funding,*** if not actually have it in hand. Establishing *that* will allow it to move into

the programmed four-year cycle. As pointed out earlier, there is now the FHWA request to prioritize, *if possible*, the Visionary projects in addition to the Financially Constrained. For Constraint purposes, the short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects or *project phases*, must be fully funded during each cycle year.

Consistency with Other Plans and Amendments

For purposes of discussion within the Long Range, consistency is addressed in *statewide* terms under 23 CFR 450.208. For purposes of application to the Long Range Plan and the TIP themselves, MPOs should review 450.316(b). The latter has the greater relevance here. There should be a narrative section in the LR in which the MPO assures that planning efforts are consistent with other Plans.

Transit Funding Actions, Projects, Studies, and Programs

Transit Formula Grant funding programs and projects must be described in the Long Range, and all projects in which Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds are used must be so identified and the applicable FTA program(s) cited. If any of the following are applicable to an MPO, they must be described within the document:

- Planning (5303, 04, and 05 Metropolitan and Statewide grant funds)
- Capital Projects (typically urbanized area 5307 grant funds)
- Facilities (5309, 5311)
- Job Access and Reverse Commute (5316)
- New Freedom (5317)
- Service including Fixed Route Bus, Deviated Route, Para-transit, Express Bus (5307, 5310, 5317)
- Service including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Light Rail (LRT), Heavy Rail (HRT), Commuter Rail (CRT), Streetcar (5309, 5311)

Safety Planning

A Safety Planning component is required in the Long Range Plan. Active, planned safety projects should be discussed in the narrative and identified as safety projects, or as having a safety component, in project secondary descriptions. For purposes of environmental documentation, *Purpose and Need* statements should reflect any safety elements within the project. If the MPO has an active ***Safety Plan***, a summary should be included in the Appendices.

Performance Measures and Transportation Performance Management Reporting

We are aware there has been a great deal of speculation and advance discussion of the above with the appearance of MAP-21 and the amendments to 23 USC 134 and 135 in the Federal Register. However, at this time there are no published Final Rule Codes of Federal Regulations addressing Performance measures, reporting requirements, and expected actions by the State and the MPOs of Alabama. Barring the publication of Final Rule requirements, it is possible that that the collaboration between ALDOT and the MPOs establishing Performance Measures will not be necessary, since activities described in 23 U.S.C. 150(c) are carried out by the State of Alabama.

- Minimum standards for States to use in developing and operating bridge and pavement management systems.
- Performance measures for Interstate and NHS pavement condition, NHS bridge condition, and Interstate and NHS performance.
- Minimum conditions for Interstate pavements – may vary geographically.
- Data elements necessary to collect and maintain standardized data to carry out a performance-based approach.

If final CFR rulemaking modifies the above, specifying MPO participation, then the collaboration will take place subject to actions called for under 23 U.S.C 150(d). States are obliged to establish targets for the measures within one (1) year of the final rule on national performance measures. 23 USC 150(d) reads:

- *States will report to DOT on progress in achieving targets within 4 years of enactment and then every two (2) years [§1203; 23 USC 150(e)] and MPOs will report to DOT on progress in their Metropolitan Transportation Plan (4 or 5 year frequency) [§1201; 23 USC 134(i)].*

- *If a State does not meet or make significant progress toward targets for 2 consecutive reporting periods, the State must document in its next report the actions it will take to achieve the targets. [§1106; 23 USC 119(e)(7)]*

Having said all this, ALDOT and Metropolitan Planning Section, for Long Range review purposes, will focus on the ***Principles and Indicators*** already established in formal Alabama planning documents and the ***Indicator data*** that will be displayed in the Appendices of the Long Range. It would serve the MPOs to ***finalize*** the Indicators in the Draft 2040 and carry those forward from this point, out to at least five (5) to seven (7) years.

Freight Planning

All MPOs are required to have a Freight Planning *component* or element in the Draft 2040 Long Range Plan. MPOs that include a TMA, though it is not required for the Draft 2040, will be expected to develop a Freight Plan for the next iteration due in 2020.

MPOs, at a minimum, should discuss all mode resources, intermodal facilities, and primary corridors within the MPA, and be familiar with access routes to river ports, industrial sites, and major shippers. In terms of truck freight, MPOs should known highway bottlenecks and their impacts on the overall MPA network.

MAP-21 required establishment of a Primary Freight Network (PFN) within one year of passage, as a first step toward a National Freight Strategic Plan (NFSP), consisting of a maximum of 27,000 highway miles. ALDOT will be working with State agencies and MPOs to develop a Statewide Primary Network for the Statewide Freight Plan. The MPO should be able to identify within its MPA, critical highway route miles for display within a Statewide Primary Network, independent of the NFSP.

Public Participation Record for the Long Range Plan

The Long Range Plan must include a record of all public participation efforts during preparation of the Long Range Plan. This may be a separate document for the larger MPOs, but smaller MPOs may opt for placing in the Appendices. The record should include all outreach,

workshops, meetings, interaction with agencies and the public, and comments received from all parties.

This record, or document, should be separate from the 2013 Public Participation Plan (PPP).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

All MPOs have a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, with the exception of Eastern Shore and Auburn. These MPOs are in the process of development and will have Bike/Ped Plans in 2014. For Long Range Plan purposes, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans should be summarized within the document, to include mapped networks (if available), project listings and tables, and proposed improvements within the MPAs. ***All*** project listings and tables within the Long Range should include known bicycle/pedestrian and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements.

Congestion Management Process and Plan

Congestion Management Plans are required for those MPOs having an urbanized area population at or exceeding 200,000, and designation as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) by USDOT. Those MPOs should have a summary of their CMP within the Long Range.

MPOs not having a TMA should include a CMP component in their documents describing those measures being undertaken to address congestion on area highways and the resulting projects funded under applicable mitigation provisions of Titles 23 and 49.

Air Quality Conformity

Birmingham is currently the only MPO in Alabama engaged in the Air Quality Conformity Process. They were declared in conformity for ground-level ozone (O_3) in FY2013 and are currently in *maintenance status.*

EPA is scheduled to propose a ***strengthening*** of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone in March of 2014. This standard is currently at .075/.75 parts per million/billion, and a lower number to within a range of .50 - .70 will raise the standard to a point where additional MPOs will be in non-conformity and thus required to go through the Air Quality Conformity Process. Non-conformity designation by EPA will typically be by county, so counties of an MPO designated in non-conformity will determine whether an MPO will be doing documentation.

The Long Range should discuss the process, describe the various activities of the MPO for Air Quality, potential impacts on roadways subject to possible mitigation, the funding issues, and the likely outcome of a designation of non-conformity. A possible scenario would be for the March 2014 EPA proposal to raise the standard, then a year for lawsuits to be dealt with, then designation by EPA for counties in non-conformity in 2015. The earliest documentation required under this scenario would be the summer of 2016.

Section 6: Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a four year program of transportation projects formally implementing the MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan. As such, it is the region's means of allocating limited transportation resources to projects and programs, and in the process, establishing a clear set of short-term transportation priorities. MPOs should review their TIP periodically, but redevelop the TIP every four years. The Transportation Improvement Program is a prioritized list of transportation projects. The projects on the TIP are taken from the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) capacity projects. The LRTP covers a 20 to 25 year time frame, while the TIP extends over four years. The TIP is often considered the short-range plan of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The TIP breaks down the LRTP projects into phases (e.g. preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and construction) and assigns a start date to each phase. The purpose of the TIP is to schedule the various phases of transportation projects for implementation.

Federal Requirements

Federal requirements for the TIP include:

1. Development in cooperation with ALDOT and public transit operators
2. An update every four years
3. A reasonable opportunity for public comment
4. Consideration of civil rights and Environmental Justice
5. A minimum four year-year timeline
6. Financial constraint by year
7. Consistency with the Long-Range Transportation Plan
8. Phase cost, and description of projects
9. Conformity with the SIP
10. A list of Federal and State financed highway, transit, bicycle, enhancement and other Title 23 United States Code eligible transportation projects and
11. Compliance with a 3-C MPO planning process

State Requirements

???????

Development

The Transportation Improvement Program records improvement priorities for the MPO area, including projects and strategies sponsored by a variety of agencies, such as county engineers, local governments, ALDOT and local transit agencies. The TIP is a Federal requirement and serves as a focal point of the planning process as partners cooperatively set project selection and funding priorities. Each partner has a responsibility in the development of the TIP. Most partners bring Federal, State, or local funds into the process. The ultimate decision on particular projects depends on the source of funds. Certain Federal funds allow the State the final decision in cooperation with the MPO, while other Federal funds allow the MPO the final decision in collaboration with the State. Local project sponsors have final lead on projects funded primarily with local funds, and the State has the lead on State funded projects.

The process to update a TIP begins with a review of the projects in the last four years of the current TIP and the current funding status for each project. The review includes an analysis of current schedules, costs, and agency budgets. The first stage of the review is done by the MPO

The normal period for reviewing the Transportation Improvement Program development process is _____. The key to successful completion is communication among all partners for reliable information concerning projects.

Essential Components

Essential components from a Federal perspective include:

1. Documentation of public involvement activities, including Environmental Justice factors, written comments and their disposition.
2. Environmental Justice assessment of disproportionate, adverse impacts and equitable distribution of benefits among targeted populations,
3. A process to prioritize projects and strategies for transportation with limited resources,
4. Air Quality documentation, including emission burdens and projects in each analysis scenario
5. Financial analysis, including projects funded, limits on project funding, and any special funding arrangements
6. Accomplishments and delays on major projects from previous TIP
7. Documentation demonstrating the existing transportation facilities are adequately operated and maintained and
8. A project list according to ALDOT specifications

The Transportation Improvement Program is financially constrained, which means that project costs are balanced against expected revenue. Using their project management system, ALDOT determines the projects that can be undertaken during the TIP time frame with expected federal and state funds. The only exception to this method involves projects funded with the Surface Transportation Attributable program and matched with local government funds. ALDOT calculates the funding levels for this program based on the urban area population of each MPO. The local governments, working through the MPO, balance these projects with the calculated revenue.

{Delete these paragraphs?}
MPOs are expected to take into account potential environmental impacts associated with the long-range transportation plan and try to mitigate those impacts. Closely related to this concept is the new requirement that MPOs consult with other agencies to eliminate or minimize conflicts caused by transportation projects. In response to new rules, the MPO adopted the "Planning Agency Consultation Process", which directs the MPO to compare other agencies documents against the draft long-range transportation plan and TIP and to provide copies of the draft documents to other agencies for their review and comment.

"According to the Federal Highway Administration report Integrating Climate Change into the Transportation Planning Process, there is general scientific consensus that the earth is experiencing a long-term warming trend and that human-induced increases in atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs) may be the predominant cause. The combustion of fossil fuels is by far the biggest source of GHS emissions. In the United States, transportation is the largest source of GHG emissions, after electricity generation. Within the transportation sector, cars and trucks account for a majority of emissions. Opportunities to reduce GHG emissions from transportation include switching to alternative fuels, using more fuel efficient vehicles, and reducing the total number of miles driven. Each of these options requires a mixture of public

and private sector involvement. Transportation planning activities, which influence how transportation systems are built and operated, can contribute to these strategies. In addition to contributing to climate change, transportation will likely also be affected by climate change. Transportation infrastructure is vulnerable to predicted changes in sea level and increases in severe weather and extreme high temperatures. Long-term transportation planning will need to respond to these threats" (Introduction to Integrating Climate Change into the Transportation Planning Process, Federal Highway Administration, Final Report, July 2008).

In order to address transportation induced climate change, MPO should add the topic to the standard agendas used at the regular committee meetings. This provides the committee members a regular opportunity to discuss the topic. At least once a year, the MPO staff should prepare a report related to GHG in order to educate the committees and to offer possible opportunities to reduce GHG emissions. As more is learned on the subject the TIP and long-range transportation plan will be modified accordingly.

Safety is a primary concern of the MPO and the governments involved in the transportation planning process. The MPO should include transportation-safety programs in their planning. As part of that program the MPO staff monitors traffic crash data and provides maps and reports to the MPO committees. In addition, the committee members should be given an opportunity to discuss safety concerns at every meeting.

Environmental Mitigation and Climate Change Consideration

The Clean Air Act (CAA) was originally adopted in 1963 and most recently amended in 1990. The purpose of the CAA is to improve air quality and to protect human health. The CAA requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six pollutants, including ground-level ozone. In 2008 EPA lowered the NAAQS for ozone from .084 to .075 parts per million.

EPA will decide if a county or metro area will be designated non-attainment for ozone. Non-attainment status will place additional requirements on the MPO. Chief among these will be the air quality conformity determination of the long-range transportation plan, the TIP, and transportation projects. Conformity is achieved when new NAAQS violations are not created, the frequency or severity of NAAQS violations are not increased, and the attainment of the NAAQS is not delayed. These conditions could prevent the inclusion of some capacity projects in the TIP.

Projects on the Transportation Improvement Program

Regional Significant Projects

All regionally significant, federally funded transportation projects are included on the TIP. In addition, regionally significant projects planned with State, local, and private funds are also on the TIP. The MPO's TIP should list state funded projects with the federally funded projects.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

Federal laws require MPOs and states to consider bicycle and pedestrian needs in all comprehensive transportation plans. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines related to these laws state that bicyclist and pedestrians will be accommodated in the design of new and improved transportation facilities. In addition, the decision not to

consider the needs of bicyclist and pedestrians should be the exception and not the rule. FHWA acceptable exceptions include the legal prohibition of walking or bicycling on a roadway, excessively disproportionate costs, and absence of existing and future need. All federally funded projects on the TIP will include bicycle and pedestrian facilities unless exceptional circumstances exist.

Level of Effort Projects

As previously mentioned, the projects on the TIP should be taken from the Long-Range Transportation Plan with the exception of Level of Effort (LVOE) projects. LVOE projects represent certain unidentified projects that will be authorized during the given fiscal year. These projects are placed in the TIP according to selected funding programs with their anticipated apportionments for each fiscal year. The selected funding programs include:

1. Transportation Enhancement Projects
2. Safety Projects such as hazard elimination roadway and rail, high speed rail, seat belt, blood alcohol content, etc.
3. Transportation, Community, and System Preservation
4. Recreational Trails
5. Federal Aid Resurfacing Program
6. GARVEE Bond Projects
7. County Allocated Funds such as, off system bridge, optional bridge, and STP non-urban
8. Federal Transit Sections 5311 (non-urban), and 5310 (Elderly and Disabilities)

Any of these LVOE type projects are considered pre-approved by the MPO and do not require any further MPO action prior to authorization. The MPO will be notified by ALDOT when a specific project within their study area is selected for implementation and will have five days to decline the project. However, any projects that have already been preselected out of these funding categories must specifically be included in the TIP prior to adoption.

Project Prioritization

Projects on the TIP may be prioritized by fiscal year. The projects on the first year of the TIP are the first priority projects and projects on the fourth year of the TIP are the fourth priority projects. Since ALDOT controls the federal and state roads in Alabama and the federal funding that is issued to the state, they determine the priority of the bulk of projects on the TIP. However, the local governments decide the priority of projects funded through the Surface Transportation Attributable program.

Consistency with Other Plans

The TIP should be consistent with the *Long-Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP). The projects on the TIP are taken from the Plan. The Plan covers a 20 to 25 year time frame, while the TIP extends over four years. The TIP is often considered the short-range plan of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The TIP breaks down the LRTP projects into phases (e.g. preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and construction) and assigns a start date to each phase. The purpose of the TIP is to schedule the various phases of transportation projects for implementation.

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a statewide listing of prioritized transportation projects prepared by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). The STIP is consistent with the statewide long-range transportation plan and the long-range transportation plans and TIPs developed by the 14 Alabama MPOs. Projects from the TIP are included in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Since the MPOs and ALDOT use the same database for the TIPs and STIP, the project lists for the documents are always in agreement.

Funding Category Descriptions

Most of the following descriptions were prepared by the Alabama Department of Transportation. In some cases the MPO staff may modify the information for clarification or to address local conditions.

Appalachian Highway System Projects

The U.S. Congress authorized the construction of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) in the Appalachian Development Act of 1965. The ADHS was designed to generate economic development in previously isolated areas, supplement the interstate system, connect Appalachia to the interstate system, and provide access to areas within the Region as well as to markets in the rest of the nation (Appalachian Regional Commission website). Most of the ADHS (92% +) is part of the National Highway System. Funding codes associated with the ADHS are APDV (Appalachian Development), CX54J (APD Corridor X 2003), and ACAP (Advance Construction Appalachian Development).

Bridge Projects (State and Federal)

This program includes new facility construction, existing bridge repair, and/or replacement. Projects selected by ALDOT are based on regional needs, maintenance and inspection criteria (sufficiency ratings), and available funding. If sufficiency ratings fall below a certain point, the bridge is automatically scheduled for repair or replacement. Typical funding codes are: ACBR (Advance Construction Bridge), BRDF (Bridge Replacement Discretionary Fund), and BRPL (Bridge Replacement).

Enhancement Projects (MAP-21 Transportation Alternative Program)

*{*Change after new regulations come out} Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act:*
A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires that 10% of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds allocated to the state be set aside (equal to or greater than the amount allocated in FY2005) for transportation enhancement activities. This funding category has specific and exclusive eligible activities listed in SAFETEA-LU. They may be found under 23 USC 101(a)(35):

1. Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
2. Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites (including historic battlefields).
3. Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities).
4. Landscaping and other scenic beautification.
5. Historic preservation.

6. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals).
7. Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use of the corridors for pedestrian or bicycle trails).
8. Inventory, control, and removal of outdoor advertising.
9. Archaeological planning and research.
10. Environmental mitigation
    a. To address water pollution due to highway runoff; or
    b. To reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity.
11. Establishment of transportation museums.

High Priority and Congressional Earmark Projects

High Priority funding is project-specific funding provided by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and extended by SAFETEA-LU. High Priority Projects (HPP) may be advanced under an Advanced Construction provision in 23 USC 117 without additional funding until HPP funds become available. Congressional Earmarks are legislative actions providing funding for a specific purpose or project outside the normal funding allocation process. High Priority coding could be AHPP (Advanced Construction High Priority Corridor) or HPPP (High Priority Project Program). Earmark funding may carry any number of codes, but some attached to Alabama projects are: FTA3C (Capital New Starts/Fed Earmark) and TCSPE (Transportation Communications System Earmarked Grant).

Interstate System Projects

This Federal-aid funding program is confined to resurfacing, restoring, rehabilitating, and reconstructing the Interstate System. High-occupancy vehicle lanes and auxiliary lanes are the only eligible capacity projects under this program. This type of funding will use codes such as IREG (Interstate Regular) and IMNT (Interstate Maintenance). The Interstate System is a component of the National Highway System (NHS).

National Highway Systems

The National Highway System (NHS) includes the Interstate Highway System as well as other roads important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility. The NHS was developed by the Department of Transportation (DOT) in cooperation with the states, local officials, and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). Funding under NHS carries NHF (National Highway Funds), NHSP (National Highway System Project), ACNH (Advance Construction National Highway System), or similar coding.

Other Federal and State Aid Projects

This is a miscellaneous category for projects that do not fit easily into other categories. Some sample funding codes are: PLN8 (Surface Transportation Metropolitan Planning), SPAR (State Planning and Research), STRP (State Revenue Sharing), and UABC (Urban Extension).

Other Surface Transportation Program Projects

Surface Transportation is a federal-aid highway program that funds a broad range of transportation capital needs, including many roads, transit, seaport and airport access, vanpool, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. This funding was originally established under TEA-21 and reinforced in SAFETEA-LU. There are at least 37 different funding codes under the category of Other Surface Transportation funding. These types of funds may be used for capacity, bridge work, intersection, and other operational improvements. In TELUS, for example, coding of

STPAA indicates Surface Transportation Program Any Area. Others might be ACFP (Advanced Construction Primary Program), CESR (Rural Secondary), or DHP8 (Surface Transportation Innovative Projects).

Safety Projects

SAFETEA-LU restructured the original TEA-21 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to provide more comprehensive funding to states for specific types of projects. The program requires a state to develop a Statewide Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). Candidate projects should "correct or improve a hazardous road location or feature, or address a highway safety problem" to become eligible for funding. Eligible types of projects include:

Safety-conscious planning;

1. Improvement in the collection and analysis of crash data;
2. Planning, integrated interoperable emergency communications equipment, operational activities, or traffic enforcement activities (including police assistance) relating to work-zone safety;
3. The addition or retrofitting of structures or other measures to eliminate or reduce accidents involving vehicles and wildlife;
4. Construction and operational improvements on high-risk rural roads;
5. Improvements for safety of the disabled;
6. Installation and maintenance of signs at pedestrian-bicycle crossings and in school zones.
7. Sample coding for safety projects would be HESS (Hazard Elimination Program), STPSA (Any Hazard), and BELT (Safety Incentive Seat Belt Apportionment).

State Funded Projects

These are typically smaller projects or phases of larger projects for which there is no Federal funding available, a county or municipality is participating with the state to proceed on a project rather than wait on Federal assistance (funds either not available or cannot be used on a certain project type), or in which the state simply chooses to do certain projects or project types with state funds. Existing project examples would include a resurfacing, patching, and striping project within a municipal city limit, a training program on non-reimbursable state grant, DBE training extended beyond Federal funding limits, or industrial access. There are a variety of scenarios in which this type of project would be done. Some common funding program identification codes would be STAT (State Program), STATC (State Program – Contract Construction), or STATS (State Program – Special Aid).

Surface Transportation Attributable Projects

This funding category is a subset of the Surface Transportation Program (STP). ALDOT distributes these funds to the MPOs based on a per capita formula. The MPOs have the authority to determine what projects are funded and the schedule. The MPO generally uses this program to improve locally owned roads. In most cases the local governments on the MPO provide the required matching funds. All of the eligibility rules for the STP program also apply to this category. This program was originally established under TEA-21 and reinforced in SAFETEA-LU. A common identification code is STPOA.

System Maintenance Projects

Roadway and bridge maintenance is provided according to system specifications, facility-life maintenance scheduling, and available funding. Projects are usually assigned a '99' code

designation. Projects include 99004 (Shoulder Repair), 99005 (Bridge Painting), 99006 (Traffic Signal Upgrading), 99054 (Roadway Mowing), and simply MAIN (Maintenance Projects).

Transit Projects

Transit projects are required for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This type of project is typically for fixed-route or demand response services in the MPO Urbanized Area or Planning Area and the primary funding provider is Federal Transit Administration (FTA) with supplemental match funding from local governments and agencies. Common coding examples would be FTA09 (Federal Transit Administration Section 5307), JARC (Job Access and Reverse Commute), and RPTO (Federal Transit Administration Section 5311).{*change when new regulations come out}

Amendment Process

The TIP will be amended periodically to adjust funding, time-frames, or other factors relevant to the projects. New projects may be added if appropriate and if funding is available. Other projects may be deleted if funding is not available. All amendments must be approved by the MPO Policy board. A signed copy of the resolution must be sent to ALDOT. The funds cannot be authorized for any amended project until the project is added on the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Alabama Division, and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) have agreed that a formal TIP amendment, requiring MPO approval and vote, is necessary when one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. the change adds a new project (excluding level of effort projects)
2. the change adversely impacts fiscal constraint
3. the change results in major scope changes
4. the change deletes a project from the TIP
5. the change results in a cost increase of 20% or $1,000,000, whichever is less

A change that does not meet any of these criteria may be processed as an Administrative Modification, requiring only concurrence from ALDOT (confirmed by Email), approving the action. The implementing planning regulations of SAFETEA-LU, amending 23 USC 134, are interpreted in FHWA's 23 CFR 450.104, which states:

> *"Administrative modification means a minor revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. An administrative modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas)."*

As reviewed under section 1.7 Air Quality Planning, if the MPO is designated nonattainment based on the current National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) the TIP would have to be amended. An air quality conformity determination report would have to be added to the TIP. In addition, the TIP project list might have to be adjusted in order to demonstrate conformity. After

the TIP has met the conformity requirement, any future TIP amendments would have to prove conformity before adoption.

Distribution and Review

MPO Transportation Improvement Projects are submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation, Transportation Planning and Modal Programs. They will review the draft and send recommendations for changes. Changes from ALDOT and the public should be incorporated into the final product. Significant changes may require another public involvement meeting. The final product should be available to the public.

Section 7: Annual Metropolitan Planning Organization Work Program

Purpose

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is developed to coordinate transportation and related planning activities for a cooperative, continuing, and comprehensive planning process. The primary objective of the UPWP is the development of an integrated planning program that considers the planning activities of each modal group and coordinates these activities to produce a total transportation plan serving all segments of the population. The UPWP contains a brief description of each task including its objectives, a description of any past work efforts and results, methodology or approach to the task, anticipated products, responsible agency or agencies, and source and amount of funding. The UPWP presents the budget and work tasks necessary to accomplish and maintain the transportation planning process within the MPO for the upcoming fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). Any significant departure from the work outlined in the UPWP requires a public review/comment period and the formal approval of the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The laws requiring Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to develop unified planning work programs are found in Section 134 of Title 23 of the United States Code and Section 5303 of Title 49 of the United States Code. The Code was superseded or amended by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP–21) Section 1201, July 2012. The rules that govern metropolitan planning organizations are published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) as Title 23, Chapter 1, Part 450, Subpart C. Section 450.308 specifically relates to the development of unified planning work programs.

Special Planning Considerations

Livability Principles and Indicators

Increasingly, federal and state agencies are using Performance Measures as a way of ensuring greater accountability for the expenditure of public funds in an ever growing number of programs and activities across a variety of disciplines. Within the transportation sector and the planning processes associated with transportation infrastructure development, ALDOT has adopted the Livability Principles and Indicators as a sustainability measurement against future actions (ALDOT).

All planning tasks must be measured against these Livability Principles:

1. Provide more transportation choices
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing
3. Enhance economic competitiveness
4. Support existing communities
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment
6. Value communities and neighborhoods

An example of the measure of sustainability of these Livability Indicators principles, follows:

1. Percentage of LRTP projects that contain bicycle and pedestrian elements, excluding transit projects
2. Percentage of transit funding in LRTP

3. Percentage of household income spent on housing and transportation
4. Unemployment rate
5. Percentage of LRTP funding that will be used to improve existing facilities
6. Number of local or MPO policies that prevented federal, state, or local funding from being leveraged or prevented collaboration between public and/or private groups in the LRTP
7. Percentage of housing units within a half mile of employment centers
8. Percentage of housing units within a half mile of a park, including school play grounds
9. Percentage of bicycle/automobile crashes
10. Percentage of pedestrian/automobile crashes

Overview of MPO Planning Activities

The MPO is required to produce three main documents; a UPWP, a long-range transportation plan (LRTP), and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The UPWP is produced on an annual basis, the LRTP is produced every three to five years, and the TIP is produced every four years. Other documents developed as part of the transportation planning process include the public involvement plan, the bicycle and pedestrian plan, and the coordinated public transit plan. The table below lists the current review periods for MPO documents.

MPO Document	Update Cycle
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	1 year
Long-range Transportation Plan	5 years/*3 years for air quality non-attainment/maintenance areas*
Transportation Improvement Program	4 years
Public Involvement Plan (PIP)	5 years
Bicycle Pedestrian Plan*	5 years *(not required)*
Coordinated Public Transit Plan	4 years*

**The Alabama Department of Transportation contracts the Coordinated Transit Plan through the Alabama Association of Regional Councils, approximately every 2-4 years*

The draft UPWP is generally submitted to ALDOT, FHWA and FTA in April of each year with the final product due in August.

Content and Format

The general format and content for the Work Program covers the basic elements which are consistent among MPOs. There will be some MPOs which have additional elements or a slight variation of these basic elements to address specific needs.

The basic Work Program should have an introduction, which describes the MPO Study Area to include a map, the top planning priorities for the MPO, a reference to the agency Prospectus, and general coordination efforts between MPO, ALDOT, FHWA and Federal Transit Administration. A narrative within the basic Work Program will contain documentation of specific projects the agency will engage in the next fiscal year. Standard categories in the narrative include short range planning, the TIP, surveillance, the Transportation plan, service and corridor studies.

The next section should include the Tasks the MPO staff plans to carry out in the next year. Each task should include a statement of purpose, goals and objectives, previous work,

proposed work and products. It should also show how much money will be dedicated to this task. Tasks are divided into several categories:

- 1.0 Administration
  - 1.1 Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
  - 1.2 Equipment and Supplies
- 2.0 Data Collection and Analysis
  - 2.1 Database maintenance and Data collection
  - 2.2 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
  - 2.3 Transportation Model Development and Maintenance
  - 2.4 Preparation of Emissions Data for MOVES
  - 2.5 Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)
- 3.0 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- 4.0 Public Involvement.
  - 4.1 Public Participation Process (PPP) Plan
  - 4.2 Title VI and Environmental Justice
  - 4.3 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
  - 4.4 Public Involvement for Air Quality Conformity
- 5.0 Environmental Mitigation and Streamlining
  - 5.1 Air Quality
  - 5.2 Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases
- 6.0 Transportation Systems
  - 6.1 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
  - 6.1.1 Air Quality Conformity Report
  - 6.1.2 Amend Long Range Project Listing for Air Quality Conformity
  - 6.2 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
  - 6.2.1 Amend FY 2012-15 TIP Project Listing for Air Quality Conformity
  - 6.3 Public Transportation
  - 6.3.1 Private Enterprise Participation
  - 6.4 Bicycle/Pedestrian Trans Planning
  - 6.5 Congestion Management Process
  - 6.6 Freight Planning
- 7.0 Transportation Safety
- 8.0 Education and Training
- 9.0 Special Projects, Corridor Development, and Developments of Regional Impact (DRI)

The UPWP should include a budget table to include a summary of agency participation summary which breaks out the amount requested for each task and how much will be paid for by ALDOT, how much by the MPO and any other sources of revenue. It should also include a summary of the total amount requested for each task.

Section 8: Transportation Planning Process Certification

Federal planning regulations require the State and the MPO certify to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration annually to ensure the planning process is addressing major issues facing the metropolitan area and is being conducted in accordance with Federal requirements.

Federal Requirements

Authority:

- 23 United States Code Section 134(i)(5)
- 49 United States Code Section 5323(k)
- 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 450.220
- 42 United States Code Section 7504, 7506 (c)(d)
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Americans with Disabilities Act

FHWA and FTA are required to review and evaluate the metropolitan transportation planning process for MPOs within designated Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least once every three years. FHWA and FTA jointly conduct these certification reviews on a multi-year cycle, ensuring that these MPOs will be federally certified, at a minimum, of every three years.

The FHWA and FTA will review the regional planning process and its three core products: the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Unified Planning Work Program. Federal agencies will coordinate with the MPOs directly for the initial desk audit. The desk audit generally requires the MPO send the Federal Agencies its planning process documents, including the most recent Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, the Unified Planning Work Program and the Public Involvement Process/Policy.

Following the desk audit, the FHWA or FTA will contact the MPO and ALDOT to set a date for the MPO site visit. The Federal Agency will prepare an agenda and the MPO will make site arrangements. The site visit is an opportunity for the Federal Agencies to visit the MPO offices and review the areas identified in the desk audit. At the conclusion of the site visit, the Federal agencies will give initial conclusions (certified or not) findings, commendations and recommendations.

A written report will be issued documenting the certification review. If the TMA MPO is certified, an official announcement and presentation will be made by the Federal agencies to the MPO board. If the MPO is not certified or certified with findings, the MPO board will be given an explanation of the actions necessary to become certified.

Self-Certification

Each MPO within a designated Transportation Management Area is required to annually certify that the planning process addresses major transportation issues of the region. All MPOs must include a certification when a new Transportation Improvement Program is submitted as part of a new State Transportation Improvement Program. This resolution must be included in the State's submission of the TIP for Federal approval. The State, as part of the STIP submittal,

must also certify that each MPO and the State are conducting the planning process and addressing major issues for Federal approval of the STIP.

The issues that should be covered by certification include:

1. Metropolitan planning factors
2. Long-Range Transportation Plan
3. Transportation Improvement Program
4. Congestion Management Program
5. Air Quality conformity
6. Travel Demand Modeling
7. Public Involvement Process
8. Environmental Justice and
9. Annual Unified Planning Work Program

The following is an example of a resolution for Self-Certification:

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING SELF-CERTIFICATION

The Alabama Department of Transportation and the Policy Committee for the MPO (Name) Urbanized Area hereby certify that the metropolitan transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with all applicable requirements including:

(1) 23 U.S.C. 134, 49 U.S.C. 5303, and 23 CFR part 450, subpart C;

(2) In nonattainment and maintenance areas, sections 174 and 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7504, 7506 (c) and (d)) and 40 CFR part 93;

(3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d–1) and 49 CFR part 21;

(4) 49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity;

(5) Section 1101(b) of the SAFETEA–LU (Pub. L. 109–59) and 49 CFR part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in USDOT funded projects;

(6) 23 CFR part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts;

(7) The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and 49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38;

(8) The Older Americans Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance;

(9) Section 324 of title 23 U.S.C. regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender; and

(10) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and 49 CFR part 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

_____	_____
Metropolitan Planning Organization	State Department of Transportation
_____	_____
Signature	Signature
_____	_____
Printed Name	Printed Name
_____	_____
Title	Title

Section 9: Transit Plans and Grant Support

**Rules may change due to MAP-21 policies*

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires the development of a Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan (CHSTP) in order to be eligible for three Federal Transit Administration programs (Section 5310 - Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities, Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute, and Section 5317 - New Freedom).

SAFETEA-LU and its subsequent regulations specify that the plan must be based on input from public, private, and non-profit transportation providers; human services providers; and the general public. Required elements include (1) an assessment of available services, (2) an assessment of transportation needs, (3) strategies, activities, and/or projects to address gaps, needs, and efficiency improvements, and (4) priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility of implementation. Minimizing duplication of services in order to maximize collective transit coverage is a prime imperative. The law and regulations do not specify who is responsible for developing the plan.

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the Alabama Association of Regional Commissions (AARC) entered into an agreement to develop 12 regional transit coordination plans in 2010. The AARC represents the 12 regional commissions that cover every county in the state. The 12 plans coincide with each commission's district. ALDOT agreed to fund 80% of the cost of the plans. The regional commissions provided the other 20%. ALDOT's portion was pass-through Federal Transit Administration (FTA) money. The commission funds came from local government membership dues and other local accounts. This plan was initially developed in 2006 an update was prepared in 2008 and 2011. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), who provides the bulk of the funding, established the plan update cycle. With the passage of the new transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) the plan will probably be updated in 2014 or 2015.

The purpose of this plan is (1) to determine transit gaps and coordination opportunities among publicly funded, human services transportation programs in Alabama and (2) to develop strategies to address the identified gaps and coordination issues. This plan does not necessarily evaluate transit service provided by the different agencies. Instead it should examine transit deficiencies and coordination issues for each county and the entire region. Since it is often impossible to distinguish between the specialized transit services (Section 5310, Section 5316, and Section 5317) and the more general transit services (Section 5307 - Urban Area and Section 5311 - Non-urbanized Area), this plan should consider all forms of transit service regardless of funding categories. The plan will provide the Alabama Department of Transportation and the local entities with information to make decisions regarding the allocation of limited federal and local transit funds.

As previously mentioned, this plan identifies current needs and strategies to address these needs. It does not attempt to forecast future needs and develop a related set of strategies. Based on these facts this plan is a short-range document. Unfortunately, many of the strategies will not be implemented in the near future due to the lack of financial support.

In Alabama, most regional commissions host a Metropolitan Planning Organization, and all MPOs will be involved in the development of a CHSTP. The plan should include the demographic characteristics, employment attributes, transit resources, transit needs, transit service barriers, and strategies to improve transit service in each county. It should inventory all public and private transit providers, their service areas and demographics and then analyze the present needs, barriors to the needs and explore ways to fulfill those needs. Generally needs will include items such as temporal and geographical gaps, age or special needs limitations, and funding requirements. Maps depicting geographic service gaps and possible coordination opportunities, potential high-transit use areas along with transit routes (when available) and potential transit destinations are very useful in this plan.

Another important component of this plan is to analyze the transit service provided with an eye to coordinating services to prevent duplication. In many cases agencies are making pickups and deliveries to the same areas of town. If this service could be accomplished by one agency it would save money. However, in many cases providers funding sources have special requirements dedicated to specified clients. Also, many insurances will not permit the interaction of transit providers.

Reviewing Transit Grant applications

The Regional Commissions are responsible for reviewing all Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 (and sometimes 5311) Transit applications to ensure that the item(s) requested will help fulfill a specified need in the plan. The commission must write a letter certifying that they have reviewed the plan and this application fulfills a need and designate which page and paragraph in this plan that this need is shown. The commission is also responsible to ensure this plan is mailed and in sufficient quantities to meet the specified deadline. (See Sample).

Sample Certification letter

Commission Letterhead

Date

Mr. Robert J. Jilla
Multimodal Transportation Engineer
Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Blvd.
Montgomery, AL 36110

XYZ Commission certifies that ABC (Public Transit) of XXX County participated in the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Revised 2011) as required by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). ABC is applying for (5310, 5311, 5316 and 5317) grant money to aid in operating and administrative purposes for the next year. This grant will help address needs as outlined in the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan on pages xx-xx. This plan can be found on http://www.XYZcommission website.pdf. If there are any questions regarding this subject, please call Mr. Joe Blow, (205) 555-2990.

John Smith
Executive Director

Section 10: Finance

Federal Metropolitan Planning funds (PL plus section 5303) are appropriated annually by Congress and distributed to the states by Federal formula. The State then allocates the funds to the individual MPOs for work detailed in their work program. Generally funds are distributed according to the population in the MPO area. Federal funds require a 20% match by any combination of State and local funds.

NEEDS HELP!!!!!!!

Section 11: Other Grants and Special Projects

Along with the previously mentioned plans and projects, there are several other grants, projects and committees that may be required. Some of these projects are as follow:

Transportation Alternative Program

When Congress passed a new transportation bill entitled Moving ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), it provided a new funding category called the Transportation Alternatives Program. It essentially replaces the long standing Transportation Enhancement (TE) program.

The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. This is a reimbursable fund with ALDOT paying 80% of the match and local governments paying 20%. Many items such as preliminary engineering and consulting fees are not reimbursable. Only local governments may submit an application for this grant.

Organizations

As transportation planners we are involved with several other organizations. These organizations help with training, information and networking. It is essential that a planner continue their education in order to maintain proficiency in the career field.

Alabama Transportation Planners Association (ATPA)

The ATPA exists to provide a forum for the metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and rural planning organizations (RPOs) in the State of Alabama to exchange information and experiences, enhance the practice of metropolitan and rural planning, provide educational opportunities, and discuss issues relative to local, state and federal policies and requirements for transportation planning. The ATPA shall additionally provide a forum for State and Federal transportation agencies to provide information and guidance on transportation planning to the MPOs/RPOs in a collective manner. For more information go to:
http://www.alabamatransportation.org/

American Planning Organization, Alabama Chapter

The purpose of the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association is to help residents of the State improve the quality of their lives through rational and comprehensive approaches to physical, economic, and human resource planning.

This mission is achieved by: Promoting planning approaches in response to developmental and social opportunities and challenges facing the State; increasing awareness of the planning process, the planning profession and the benefits that both can bring to the State of Alabama; Supporting planning education and fostering the growth of professional planners' knowledge and skills; encouraging the exchange of planning information and experience in Alabama; and Working with other organizations in the State to foster common goals. A major effort of the organization is to help members get certified into the American Institute of Certified Planners

(AICP). This certification combines, education, experience with an exam. Certified planners can generally command a higher salary than non-certified planners.

**For more information go to: http://alabamaplanning.org/*

Institute of Transportation Engineers

The Institute of Transportation Engineers is an international educational and scientific association of transportation professionals who are responsible for meeting mobility and safety needs. ITE facilitates the application of technology and scientific principles to research, planning, functional design, implementation, operation, policy development and management for any mode of ground transportation. Through its products and services, ITE promotes professional development of its members, supports and encourages education, stimulates research, develops public awareness programs and serves as a conduit for the exchange of professional information. The group has several types of certifications including Transportation Professionals. *See http://www.ite.org/.*

Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA)

The Alabama Chapter of URISA was developed as a consortium of GIS professionals, agencies, and corporations driven to help build GIS programs and standards in Alabama, and to provide the best geospatial information and services. URISA-AL is organized to help develop the Alabama geospatial community and improve professional development and certification.

Throughout the year URISA-AL participates in GIS events throughout the State and contributes to the professional landscape. We provide seminars, workshops, and facilitate the exchange of information.

This group is focused on becoming a strong professional organization by encouraging more of the GIS community to become certified Geographic Information Systems Professionals (GISPs), increasing membership, and creating an environment for better networking and information sharing through committees for Outreach and Communications, these committees are intended to better serve our membership and to encourage increased participation in URISA-AL.

It is a recognized Chapter of National URISA, and enjoys cooperation and sponsorship from URISA and the other State and Regional Chapters. Look for more information on the URISA.org web site.

Alabama Chapter of URISA remains dedicated to the following goals:

- Continued focus on low-cost certified workshops.
- Create certified instructors from the Alabama Chapter.
- Develop stronger relationships with our sister chapters.
- Develop sponsorships from companies and other organizations.
- Work with other professional groups.
- Share information and technology such as web applications with other chapters.
- Develop a student outreach program to develop long-term URISA members.
- Create regions in the state to better serve the potential members.
- Increase the board membership to provide more representation for the regions and assist in supporting the chapter.
- Create a social wing of Alabama URISA for a non-structured method of networking and information sharing

A major effort of the organization is to help those working in GIS receive a GIS certification.

For more information go to: http://www.urisa-al.org/

Appendix A: Transportation Planning Terms and Acronyms

Term	Definition
AAA	Area Agency on Aging
AADT	Average Annual Daily Traffic count
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADAP	Alabama disabilities advocacy program
ADT	Average Daily Traffic count
AHD	Alabama Highway Department; now Alabama Department of Transportation
ALDOT	Alabama Department of Transportation
ARC	Appalachian regional commission
ARC	Association of Retarded Citizens
Bicycle / Pedestrian Scale Development	Development that consists of a mix of land uses (residential, commercial, public) in close proximity, where one could comfortably walk or ride a bicycle from their origin (e.g. Residence, place of employment) to their destination (e.g. Place of employment, store, government facility, park)
BPC	Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
BR	Bridge funding program; also BRON
CA	Capital funds (transit)
CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee; now CTAC
CE	Categorical Exclusion, a phase of the environmental review
CHSTP	Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan, or Coordinated Transit Plan
CN	Construction - the final phase of transportation project, the actual building of the project
CTAC	Citizens transportation advisory committee
DPI or DPIP	Innovative/Special funding program, applies to projects specifically named in federal legislation
EA	Environmental Assessment, a phase of the environmental review
EIS	Environmental impact statement
Enhancement Funds	10% of all STP funds allocated to a state are required to be spent on enhancement projects, eligible projects include, but are not limited to, acquisition of historic sites and construction of pedestrian or bicycle facilities
EPA	Environmental protection agency
FHWA	Federal highway administration
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact, a phase of the environmental review
FTA	Federal transit administration
Functional Classification System	A system to distinguish roads according to the type of service they are intended to provide
GIS	Geographic Information System - a computer system that ties together cartographic images with databases, it allows the user to create new maps and databases through various means including overlay and query operations
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991; replaced first by TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and MAP-21

Term	Definition
ITS	Intelligent transportation system
JARC	Job Access and Reverse Commute - Federal Transit Administration Section 5316 funding program
LOC	Local funding
Long-Range Transportation Plan	A transportation plan that outlines the projects that will be required to meet the needs of an area over an extended period of time usually 20 years, updated every 4 to 5 years
LRP	Long-range transportation plan
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, replaced SAFETEA-LU
MPO	Metropolitan planning organization
New Freedoms	Federal Transit Administration Section 5317 funding program
NHS	National Highway System, a transportation funding category, only projects on designated NHS routes can use these funds; also NHSP
OP	Operating funds (transit)
PARA	Parks and Recreation Authority
PE	Preliminary Engineering - the first phase of most transportation projects, the study and design of the project
ROD	Record of Decision, a phase of the environmental review
ROW	Right of Way - a phase of transportation projects, the purchase of right of way
RPO	Rural planning organization
RW	Right of Way - a phase of transportation projects, the purchase of right of way
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users - (Pub. L. 109–59, August 10, 2005)
Section 5303	Federal Transit Administration funding program for technical studies
Section 5307	Federal Transit Administration funding program for urban area transit capital and operating expenses
Section 5309	Federal Transit Administration funding program for capital transit improvements
Section 5310	Federal Transit Administration funding program for elderly and disabled transit capital assistance
Section 5311	Federal Transit Administration funding program for rural area transit capital and operating expenses
Section 5316	Federal Transit Administration funding program for job access and reverse commute transit, aka JARC
Section 5317	Federal Transit Administration funding program for new Americans with Disabilities Act transit assistance, aka New Freedoms
ST	State funding
STAA	Surface Transportation Any Area funding category, represents funds that may be used anywhere in the state, ALDOT has the authority to allocate these funds
STEE	Surface Transportation Enhancement funding category, funds are distributed by the state based on criteria determined on the application, 10% of all STP funds

Term	Definition
	allocated to a state must be used for enhancement projects
STIP	State transportation improvement program
STOA	Surface Transportation Other Area funding category, represents funds that are used in Urban Areas with Populations less than 200,000
STP	Surface Transportation Program, a transportation funding category, Urban Areas are allocated an amount of funds annually based on a certain dollar amount per capita
TAZ	Transportation or Traffic Analysis Zone - districts used for computer traffic modeling
TCC	Technical coordinating committee
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century
TELUS	Transportation, Economic, and Land Use System (TELUS) - web-based software used to manage and integrate the TIP and STIP processes and databases
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program - a list of projects slated to begin over a 4-year period, revised/rebalanced every year and updated every four years
TR	Transit project
TranPlan	Transportation computer modeling program used by the Alabama MPO's
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), (MAP-21)	Application process to receive STP funds allocated to the state required to be spent on enhancement projects, eligible projects include, but are not limited to, acquisition of historic sites and construction of pedestrian or bicycle facilities
Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program	Application process to receive STP funds allocated to the state required to be spent on enhancement projects, eligible projects include, but are not limited to, acquisition of historic sites and construction of pedestrian or bicycle facilities. Replaced by TAP
UCP -	United cerebral palsy
UMTA	Urban Mass Transit Administration; now FTA
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program - a set of tasks that the WARC staff is committed to perform over a fiscal year, updated annually
Urban Area Boundary	Boundary surrounding a Census Bureau defined urbanized area, established by the MPO with ALDOT and FHWA approval
UT	Utility Construction - a phase of transportation projects, the relocation of utilities

Appendix B: The Life of a Federally Funded Project

The following briefly outlines the basic process a project goes through from the inception to construction completion.

Project Origin
Projects normally start with a MPO committee recommendation. It may come about due to factors such as congestion, new developments or businesses or in response to projected needs. The Alabama Department of Transportation may also recommend a project or it could come through a political earmark or other Special Grant application.

Addition to the Long-Range Plan
Projects must be added to the Long-Range Plan prior to consideration by the ALDOT. This will require all MPO committees to review the proposed project for addition and or amendment into the Long-Range Plan. At this point, the ALDOT, City or County may do some preliminary engineering and survey work to determine the scope and cost of the project. Remember Long-Range plans must be financially balanced, so the addition of one project may mean the deletion of another from the plan. In addition this amendment or addition must go through the Public Involvement Process as outlined by the MPO.

Addition to the Transportation Improvement Program
Once the project has been approved through the MPO and ALDOT, it must be added into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the State TIP (STIP). Once gain the MPO should ensure the TIP remains financially balanced and ensure the inclusion of the Public Involvement Process.

Environmental Process
At this point the project will undergo a review by the Environmental department to insure that the project will cause no undue environmental impact upon the area. For many projects, the project will receive a Categorical Exclusion (CE) which takes 6-8 months and is used for most resurfacing or improvement projects. A new project will undergo an Environmental Assessment (EA) which averages 2-3 years and ends with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or the start of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which last about five years and will end with a Record of Decision (ROD).

Project Phases
If the project passes the Environmental Process and there is still money available for the project, it will go into the Construction Phase. This will include Preliminary Engineering (PE), Right-of-Way Acquisition (RW), Utility Relocation (UT) and Construction (CN). Some of these phases may occur simultaneously or not at all.

The development of a project takes several years and may rise and fall in the priority lists. A carefully planned and developed may be “bumped” due to Political earmarking. Outside of the Metropolitan Planning areas, the Alabama Department of Transportation makes all the decisions regarding the development of a projects, although consideration is given to input from the public and the Rural Planning Organizations.

Appendix C: Alabama's Federal Funding by Category

SAFETEA-LU FY 2011			MAP-21	
Interstate Maintenance	$132,684,000		National Highway Performance Program	$424,926,000
National Highway	$149,556,000			
APD	$128,442,000		NHPP Exempt from Obligation Authority	$13,176,000
Bridge On System	$66,614,000			
Total	$477,296,000		Total	$438,102,000
STP – State's Portion	$100,119,000		STP – State's Portion	$116,785,000
STP-Large Urban >200k	$27,271,000		ST-Large Urban (>200k)	$35,705,000
STP-Small Urban	$15,240,000		STP-Small Urban	$13,312,000
Counties	$13,189,000		Counties	$23,891,000
Bridge off 15%	$20,311,000		Bridge Off System	$11,820,000
Equity Bonus	$44,797,000			
Total	$220,927,000		Total	$201,513,000
Rail Hazard Elim	$2,039,000		Rail Hazard Elim	$2,254,000
Rail Protective Dev	$2,039,000		Rail Protective Dev	$2,254,000
HSIP	$30,131,000		HSIP	$43,830,000
High Risk Rural Roads	$2,025,000			
Total	$36,235,000		Total	$48,338,000
			TA-Any Area	$7,524,000
STPTE	$17,313,000		TA-Large Urban (>200k)	$2,666,000
Safe Routes to School	$2,557,000		TA-Other Area	$1,640,000
			TA-Non Urban	$3,218,000
Total	$19,870,000		Total	$15,048,000
Rec Trails	$2,438,000		Rec Trails	$1,732,000
State Planning	$13,262,000		State Planning	$14,512,000
Metro Planning	$2,736,000		Metro Planning	$2,915,000
			CMAQ	$8,189,000
			Reduce PM 2.5	$2,730,000
CMAQ	$12,116,000		Total	$10,919,000
GRAND TOTAL	**$784,880,000**		**GRAND TOTAL**	**$733,079,000**

Appendix D: Highway Functional Classification

Functional classification is used by Federal officials to identify roads, streets and highways eligible for /federal funds. To qualify to Federal funds, a facility must be classified higher than a "local" on the urban and rural system. There are six functional classifications of roadways:

- Interstate
- Other Principal Arterial
- Freeway/expressway
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local (also known as "unclassified roads")

Functional classification is used as a management tool in transportation planning and as a measure of a route's importance and efficiency in project selection and program management. It is also used to determine maintenance allocations and data collection and to set design criteria for various roadway features such as lane and shoulder widths, horizontal and vertical clearances and design speeds.

MPOs have the responsibility for initiating requests for revisions to the functional classification and Federal-aid systems located within their urbanized boundary. MPOs are to forward requests for system revision, along with a recommendation for approval or disapproval to the ALDOT Planning Department.

The ALDOT Planning Department is responsible for reviewing system revision requests for completeness of format, content, and compliance with concepts, criteria, definitions and procedures for developing functional classifications.

"The Federal Highway Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria and Procedures, 2012" draft explains in detail how a road is functionally classified and the criteria considered to classify a road. The document can be found at: http://dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/Procurement/RFP/RFP_13_47_Draft_Functional_Classification_Guidelines_Dec2012.pdf. This is a 72 page document which is much too cumbersome to be duplicated within this handbook. ALDOT is presently using the criteria found in the draft document to add or change road classifications. The basics of requesting a change or addition is as follows:

**Criteria for Functional Classification Change*
(http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/fctoc.htm)

1. *Service to urban activity centers - The greater the importance of an urban activity center, in terms of the nature and quantity of travel generated, the wider is its range of trip attraction and, therefore, the greater its need to be served by a higher type system. Some urban activity centers may be evaluated for relative importance by quantitative measures of size and intensity of use, such as number of employees, trip-end density, and the like. In determining the hierarchy of trip generation centers, it may be helpful to consider them in groups arranged according to such measures. These can be plotted from high to low. Such an analysis may be useful in identifying the trip generators that should be served by each functional system. Typically, there are comparatively few very large generators in an*

urbanized area and these should be served by the principal arterial system.

Where urban activity centers of social and economic importance to the area cannot be weighed quantitatively, they should be identified, subjectively ranked, and appropriately served by the principal or minor arterial system as warranted. Subjective comparison of the relative importance of these centers to those of the first type may be helpful.

Centers appropriately served by arterials should generally include traffic generators of regional or community importance. These consist of the business districts of the central city as well as those of satellite communities, shopping centers, recreational facilities which serve larger than purely local areas, transportation terminals, industrial centers, large high-density residential developments, and the like. These travel generators may be considered to be served by arterials if such a facility passes within one-quarter to one mile of the limits of the activity center, depending upon the type of arterial and the size of the generator. All trip generators which warrant arterial service should be located on a suitable map or overlay, identified according to relative importance. FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines, 1989

2. *System continuity - The arterial system should be completely integrated, with stub ends occurring only at the urban area boundary (in which case they connect with a rural arterial or a rural collector) or in areas having unusual topographic features, such as sea coasts. FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines, 1989*

In rare instances, system continuity should not be an absolute constraint for the functional classification of systems. Exceptions could be permitted where long-distance trips end at major centers, such as airports. FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines, 1989

3. *Land-use considerations - Land use is a primary consideration in functional classification, for the mosaic of existing land use largely governs overall travel patterns, travel density, and street spacing.*

The transportation system is a major structural element of the community. It serves as a circulatory system providing travel mobility, but it serves equally as a skeletal system providing a relatively permanent framework which delineates and influences the pattern of land development, and within which residential neighborhoods and other land uses may develop and function. The preservation of neighborhoods, the stabilization of desirable land uses, and the encouragement of orderly development are among the basic considerations in the development of functional street systems.

The concept of streets as a land use is also important in functional classification. In the same manner that industrial activities usually make undesirable neighbors for residential districts, but make suitable neighbors for railroads, so must streets and traffic be viewed in terms of their impact upon as well as service to adjacent land uses. The classification of streets into functional types recognizes this and encompasses, at one extreme, local streets which furnish access to abutting land and discourage through-traffic movement, and at the other extreme, arterials which furnish a primary service to through travel and avoid penetrating identifiable neighborhoods where possible. Establishment of functional street systems and unification of these systems into a balanced network are basic to comprehensive urban planning and must be concurrently accomplished as an integral component of urban planning procedures.

Using suitable overlays on the base transportation network, maps should be prepared which identify all sizeable areas of similar land-use characteristics, such as industrial, commercial, institutional, open space, or residential. Maps such as this are readily available in most urbanized areas in a-form requiring little or no additional work. FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines, 1989

4. Spacing between routes - The geometric configuration of highway and street systems must be related to the spatial distribution of the activities to be served and to the density of traffic generated. Generally, the more intense the development, the closer the spacing required. In the less dense suburban portions of an urbanized area, neighborhoods tend to be larger than in the more dense central cities. These less dense areas will not require the same close spacing of facilities to serve traffic as the areas closer to the central business district (CBD).

Arterial Spacing:
Central business district - 1/8-1/2 mile
Urban (central city except CBD) - 1/2-1 mile
Suburban - 1-2 miles
Lowest density development - 2-3 miles

FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines, 1989

5. Average trip length - A basic assumption in assigning facilities to logical functional groupings is that higher order systems should generally serve the longest trips. Figure 111-6 illustrates a characteristic high-to-low ordering of average trip lengths on segments of a highway network in a large urban area. - Only comparatively few miles of urban streets and highways serve trips of any great length; a somewhat greater mileage serves trips of moderate length; and a substantial mileage serves comparatively short trips. The approximate break points between these trip length groupings can suggest possible ranges of average trip length for each of the functional system.

A quantitative measure of average trip length on a facility can be obtained if desired via the traffic assignment process. However, it is also possible to apply this criterion in a generalized way without the benefit of quantitative measurements. This requires a knowledge of the nature of travel served by individual roads. Facilities which serve relatively long trips (including trips passing through the urban area, trips between the suburbs and central city, trips between outlying communities, and long trips occurring within the central city) are likely to be functioning as arterials and should be considered for inclusion in the preliminary arterial system.

An exception in application of the average trip length criterion lies in the existence of outlying minor routes which, by virtue of their distance from the metropolitan center, may carry an unusually high proportion of long trips; indeed, longer average trip lengths than on some principal arterials located closer to the center of the metropolitan area. Consequently, it is necessary to consider trip length within the basic framework of other criteria that reflect the other characteristics of a facility as well as the type of area the facility is in. FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines, 1989

6. Traffic volume - In functional classification, the routes with the highest traffic volumes are likely to be included in the highest type systems, although this is by no means a firm rule. To assist in developing specific volume criteria for an individual urban area, it is suggested that a list of volumes on individual route segments be plotted (from high to low) against the mileage of routes. Notice that there are usually relatively few miles of the system that carry high volumes and a modest mileage carrying moderate volumes, but that most mileage comprises low-volume routes.

Most high-volume streets and highways in an urban area function as arterials. But there are exceptions, notable in intensely developed areas where high-volume facilities function as collectors, serving traffic movements between local streets and arterials, or providing a high degree of direct access service to abutting property. For example, some roads which border on large traffic generators may carry proportionately high volumes of traffic while functioning as collectors.

To use the volume criterion as an aid in establishing a preliminary arterial system, it is desirable to have traffic volume data on all segments that probably will be classified as arterials and on all or most facilities which will eventually comprise the ""upper"" portion of the next lower functional class of roads. This is necessary for determining the approximate volume range in which the break between arterials and collectors occurs (considering the exceptions noted above). Traffic volume flow raps as well as a rank order distribution of road segments based upon volume can also assist in the analysis.

It is not intended that traffic counts be made specifically for this analysis. Rather, it is hoped that extensive use will be made of the most recent data already available. FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines, 1989

7. Control of access - Control of access is perhaps the easiest criterion to apply, since facilities with full or partial control of access will almost always be in the arterial class. It may therefore be advantageous to delineate these facilities at the very outset, thereby providing for a convenient starting point in defining a preliminary system of arterials. FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines, 1989

8. Vehicle-miles of travel and mileage - The extent of vehicle-miles of travel and system mileage to be included in the preliminary arterial system classification should be on the high side of the values entered in Table 11-3. This will be the natural outcome of including in this system all facilities about which serious question remains as to whether they are arterials or collectors. It is logical to include such facilities initially in order that they may be subjected to the more stringent analyses described in step D. FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines, 1989

9. Lane additions (ALDOT Request)

**Check for currency*