



Public Participation Plan

**Prepared by the
Transportation Citizens Committee**

**Adopted June 11, 2008
By the Birmingham MPO
www.bhammpo.org**

RESOLUTION 08 - 0611

Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Adopting a Public Participation Process Plan (PPP) for FY2009 as Prepared by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

WHEREAS, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participating in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance;” and,

WHEREAS, Presidential Executive Order 12898 of 1994 states that “each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice [which includes social justice] part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low - income populations;” and

WHEREAS, in 1997, the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued its DOT Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low - Income Populations; and

WHEREAS, 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 450, Subpart B, Section 210(a) instructs that “the State shall develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points;” and

WHEREAS, Section 6001 of SAFETEA - LU, amends 23 USC 134 (i)(5)(A) and (C) and 135 (f)(3)(A) and (C) to further expand the public participation process and that it “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.” Part (C) further specifies the use of such methods as “visualization techniques” and “electronically accessible format and means” to afford “reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information;” and


WHEREAS, consistent with the declaration of these provisions, the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation, has prepared a Public Participation Process Plan for Fiscal Year 2009; and,

WHEREAS, 23 CFR Part 450, Subpart C, Section 316(b)(1)(ix) states, “public participation processes shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all;”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BIRMINGHAM METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) THAT:

SECTION ONE: The MPO has reviewed its public participation procedures, hereafter referred to as the Public Participation Process Plan (PPP), to assure that full and open access to the MPO decision - making process is provided for all citizens, and amends the document to be in compliance with relevant provisions of Public Law 109 - 59 SAFETEA - LU (August 2005) as stated within the resolution.

SECTION TWO: The MPO adopts the Public Participation Process Plan (PPP) in order to maintain consistency with federal and state requirements and to improve and streamline the Public Participation Process. Passed and duly adopted by the MPO on this 11th day of June, 2008.


Date 6-11-2008
Mr. Randy Cole, Chairman, MPO

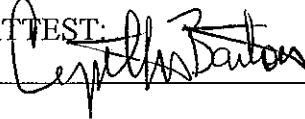
ATTEST:

Date June 11, 2008

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The introduction provides an overview of the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization's operation, its major plans and programs and the current legislation for public participation.

1.1 Legal Authority

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) regulations under Federal Highway Administration 23 CFR 450.316 adopted February 14, 2007, requires the metropolitan planning process to be continuous, cooperative, comprehensive, and provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors:

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 accessibility and mobility of people and 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.

Specific to the public involvement process, one key change in SAFETEA-LU is the expanded definition of "participation by interested parties" by developing and using a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing 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 reasonable opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process.

When developing the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program the MPO shall consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPO that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with planning activities. In addition to the methods and database outlined in Section 2.4 Participation Techniques, the consultation process shall include

agencies to determine available conservation plans or maps, inventories of natural or historic resources, through the following process:

- a.. Geographic Information System (GIS) overlays showing the past and current conditions of the natural and built environments.
- b. An inventory of predictive models that could be used for determining the future conditions of the natural and built environment.
- c. Environmental scans that identify environmental resources and environmentally sensitive areas.
- d. Description of watersheds.
- e. The outputs of natural resource planning efforts and plans, to include wildlife conservation, special area management, multiple species habitat conservation, and natural resource conservation.

As outlined in SAFETEA-LU, public meetings must, to the extent feasible and reasonable, be held at accessible locations and times convenient to expected participants. All plans must be available on a website and documents are to be written in easily understandable language. Further, SAFETEA-LU stresses the use of visual components to enhance communications.

In addition, 40 CFR Part 93, the Conformity to State or Federal Implementation Plan of Transportation Plans, Programs and Projects Developed, Funded or Approved Under Title 23 U.S.C. or the Federal Transit Laws, 93.105, paragraph (e), requires affected agencies making conformity determinations on transportation plans, programs and projects to establish a proactive public involvement process which provides opportunity for public review and comment by, at a minimum, providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information considered by the agency at the beginning of the public comment period and prior to taking formal action on a conformity determination for all transportation plans and TIPs.

An agreement, executed in February 1982 and amended in December 1991 and May 1995, exists for the purpose of administering the urban transportation planning process in the Birmingham Urbanized Area under Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and Environmental Protection Agency Programs. The agreement is among:

Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM),
Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT),
Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA),
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPC),
Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH), and
Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

1.2 MPO Composition and Committees

MPO Composition

The MPO Board consists of the following voting members.

- a. Twelve (12) representatives from a district (number 1) composed of the City of Birmingham of which at least five representatives shall be elected officials, to be selected by the Mayor.
- b. Seven (7) representatives from a district (number 2) composed of unincorporated Jefferson County, of which at least three representatives shall be elected officials, to be selected by the Jefferson County Commissioner of Roads and Transportation.
- c. Fourteen (14) representatives from a district (number 3) composed of all other Jefferson County municipalities, of which at least 10 representatives shall be elected officials, to be selected by the Jefferson County Mayor's Association.
- d. Seven (7) representatives from a district (number 4) composed of Shelby County municipalities and unincorporated area, four of which shall be appointed by the mayors of Pelham, Alabaster, Helena and Hoover, and three of which shall be appointed by the Shelby County Commission. One representative of the Shelby County Commission shall be an elected official.
- e. Division Engineer, State of Alabama Department of Transportation
- f. One representative from the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority, to be selected by the Transit Authority Board
- g. Any member of the Joint Legislative Transportation Committee in a majority Jefferson or Shelby County legislative district.

The MPO meeting is held the second Wednesday of each month, 1:30 – 2:30 pm. For location please visit www.bhammpo.org/committee/mpo.htm

The Birmingham MPO is advised by three committees:

Transportation Citizens Committee

Committee membership shall be a maximum of 50 voting members. Membership shall be geographically representative of the urban area based upon the amount of population. Representation shall be apportioned by district according to the population of the decennial Census. The following are the designated districts according to the 2000 Census:

- a. City of Birmingham - 15 members
- b. South/southeast Jefferson County - 8 members
- c. West/southwest Jefferson County - 8 members
- d. East/northeast Jefferson County - 6 members
- e. North/northwest Jefferson County - 4 members
- f. Shelby County - 9 members

This Committee makes recommendations to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) regarding the documents and materials necessary for the MPO annual endorsement. They make recommendations to the MPO regarding the elements of the urban transportation planning process necessary to meet the requirements for

certification. They assist the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, where possible, in the development of specific program solutions to area wide needs as identified through community research and public meetings. They coordinate transportation planning activities related to public transit with the Transit Advisory Committee of BJCTA.

The Transportation Citizen Committee meeting is held the third Wednesday of each month, 12:00 pm. For location please visit www.bhammpo.org/committee/transcitizens.htm

Transportation Technical Committee:

The Committee is composed of the following:

- a. Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority Representative
- b. City of Birmingham Chief Planner and Traffic Engineer
- c. Jefferson County Department of Roads and Transportation County Representative
- d. Alabama Department of Transportation:
 - Multimodal Transportation Engineer, Montgomery
 - Preconstruction Engineer, Birmingham
 - Environmental Coordinator, Montgomery
 - Maintenance Representative, Birmingham
- e. Shelby County:
 - Shelby County Highway Department Representative
 - Shelby County Development Services Representative
- f. Jefferson County Department of Health Representative
- g. Railroad Representative
- h. Trucking Representative
- i. Bicycle / Pedestrian Representative
- j. City of Homewood Representative
- k. City of Hoover Representative
- l. City of Vestavia Hills Representative
- m. University of Alabama at Birmingham:
 - Executive Director of Campus Planning
 - Parking and Transportation Services Director – Auxiliary Services
- n. CLASTRAN Transportation Mobility Manager
- o. Traffic Safety Representative
- p. Operation New Birmingham Representative
- q. At-Large: Technical and Professional personnel who are not members by organization are eligible for At-Large membership. There is a maximum of 20 At-Large members

This Committee makes recommendations to the MPO regarding the documents and materials necessary for the MPO endorsements and recommendations to the MPO regarding the elements of the metropolitan planning process necessary to meet the requirements for certification. It assists the RPC, where possible, in the development of

specific program solutions to area wide needs as identified through community research and public meetings.

The Transportation Technical Committee meeting is held the fourth Wednesday of each month, 10:00 – 11:00 am. For location please visit www.bhammpo.org/committee/transtechical.htm

MPO Subcommittee

The following are voting members of the MPO Subcommittee:

- a. Three (3) representatives from district number 1, City of Birmingham, to be selected by the Mayor.
- b. Three (3) representatives from district number 2, unincorporated Jefferson County, to be selected by the Jefferson County Commissioner of Roads and Transportation.
- c. Three (3) representatives from district number 3, Jefferson County Municipalities, to be selected by the Jefferson County Mayor's Association.
- d. Three (3) representatives from district number 4, Shelby County municipalities and unincorporated area, to be selected by the Shelby County Commission.
- e. Division Engineer, State of Alabama Department of Transportation.
- f. One representative from the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority, to be selected by the Transit Authority Board.
- g. The County Commission Chairman of Blount, Chilton, St. Clair and Walker Counties, or his designee, as ex-officio members.

The purpose of the MPO Subcommittee is to provide recommendations to the MPO related to the MPO responsibilities. The MPO Subcommittee shall conduct activities that result in an action by the MPO concerning any of these legal responsibilities. It may also at times confer with the RPC Board of Directors.

The MPO Subcommittee meeting is held the fourth Thursday of each month, 1:30 – 2:30 pm. For location please visit www.bhammpo.org/committee/mposub.htm

An annual meeting schedule is posted and distributed at meetings.

1.3 MPO Transportation Plans and Programs

There are six primary transportation documents that the MPO must regularly prepare and obtain approval from the MPO voting members:

1. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP): The LRTP is the policy plan that guides transportation planning for at least 20 years into the future. At least every four years in air quality nonattainment areas like the greater Birmingham area goals and policies are revisited with a great deal of public and agency consultative discussion as scenarios are developed and tested.
2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): The TIP is the priority spending program development out of the LRTP. A new TIP is prepared, at a minimum every four years and is recognized as the area's portion of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

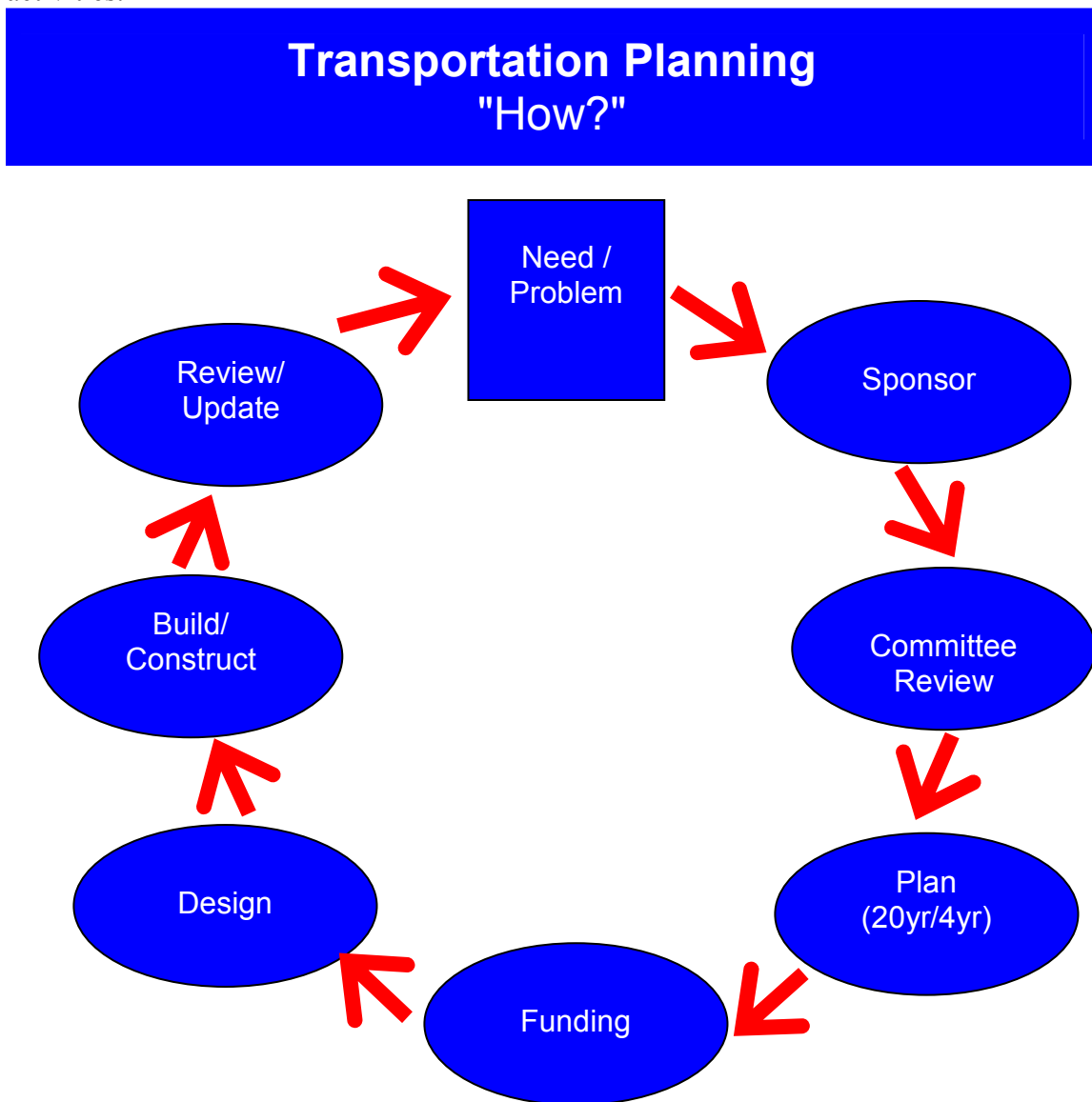
3. Congestion Management shall be addressed in regard to the LRTP and TIP through a process that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively development and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 through the use of travel demand reductions and operational management strategies.
4. Conformity Determination Report (CDR): The CDR is a report accompanying a regional transportation plan that signifies that emissions from travel on the area's transportation system shown in the plan are consistent with the area's goals for air quality. These air quality goals are prescribed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the federal Clean Air Act.
5. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): The MPO is responsible for the development of a Unified Planning Work Program, an instrument for coordinating transportation and comprehensive planning the area. The UPWP is developed annually with all of the transportation planning agencies in the MPO area.
6. Public Participation Plan (PPP): The Birmingham MPO Public Participation Plan includes a proactive public involvement process that supports and encourages early and continuous opportunities for the public to express its views on transportation issues and to become active participants in the regional transportation planning decision making process. As a "living document" this Plan is continually reviewed for possible revisions.

2.0 PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Birmingham MPO's Public Participation Plan is periodically reviewed as part of the MPO's ongoing commitment to actively evaluate and improve the public involvement process and assure compliance with State and Federal requirements.

2.1 General Purpose

Meaningful and effective public participation is essential to the successful implementation of any transportation planning project or program. Active involvement of the citizens and other database contacts leads to the incorporation of local and regional concerns, needs, values and ideas into governmental decision making, leading to better decisions that have public support. This participation plan is intended to outline the guidelines used by the Birmingham MPO during the course of public participation activities.



2.2 Overview

The Birmingham MPO actively pursues public involvement in three areas:

1. Regular and special business meetings of the MPO and its advisory committees are conducted in an open public forum with prior notification and provisions for receiving public comment, in accordance with Alabama Law.
2. Development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) include opportunities for public involvement and comment prior to adoption by the MPO
3. Ongoing updates of the MPO activities are provided to the public in several ways, including the Internet website, media coverage, flyers and newsletters.

2.3 Environmental Justice Considerations

The Birmingham MPO places emphasis on the commitment mandated in Executive Order 12898 to protect low income and minority communities / citizens from disproportionate adverse impacts based on planning and implementation of projects and programs identified in the transportation improvement program. The MPO provides for considerable participation activity towards this environmental justice goal through the opportunity, both formal and informal for these identified citizens to share their ideas and concerns throughout the planning and decision making process. Further information is available in the “Documentation of the Transportation Planning Process and Approach to Environmental Justice, published by the Birmingham MPO, November 2005.

2.4 Participation Techniques

The MPO relies on the distribution of printed materials, electronic communications and staff presentations to keep the public informed about its activities and programs. Public involvement is an on-going activity of the MPO with several techniques used on a continuous basis. Public involvement is also an integral part of special projects such as corridor studies and continuous activities such as the annual Transportation Improvement Program process and Long Range Transportation Plan updates.

This section contains descriptions of public involvement tools currently used by the MPO. Included with the description is a list of activities that each tool may be used. In order to present a more comprehensive picture of available techniques, additional tools used by other agencies are also described.

MPO Website

The Birmingham MPO launched its web site (www.bhammpo.org) and it has proved to be an invaluable tool in the MPO’s overall Public Participation Plan. The site includes basic information about the MPO process, members, calendar of meetings/events and contact information. Over the years, the site has been expanded to include information about specific projects undertaken by the MPO. Work products, such as the UPWP, TIP and LRTP are available for downloading from the site, as well as traffic counts and several maps and brochures. This site also provides links to local and national transportation related sites. Additionally, individuals are able to submit comments. The

site is used as an informational/educational tool, as well as to advertise opportunities for public involvement.

MPO Database

MPO staff maintains a database of all contacts representing business, civic, Federal, State and local agencies and interested public. The database includes committee membership, mailing information, phone and fax numbers, e-mail addresses and web sites. The database is used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists, special interest/advocacy groups and homeowner association contacts, and is the foundation of the public involvement meeting mailing list. The database is also used to establish and maintain a list of e-mail contacts for electronic meeting notifications and announcements.

The Transportation Citizens Committee shall be responsible for updating annually a public involvement database in developing a process for outreach and notification of the public, especially populations identified in Executive Order 12898, FHWA Order 6640.23 and DOT Order 5610.2 relating to Environmental Justice. The Metropolitan Planning Organization shall annually review the program mailing list. The current categories are as follows:

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES
FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS	
COMMUNITY / NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS	CITY OF BIRMINGHAM CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD CITY OF BIRMINGHAM NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS
PUBLIC INTEREST	
CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS	
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	GENERAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS JEFFERSON COUNTY LIBRARIES SHELBY COUNTY LIBRARIES JEFFERSON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSIONS SHELBY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSIONS PARK AGENCIES MILITARY RECRUITING STATIONS
MEDIA	NEWSPAPERS MAGAZINES RADIO TELEVISION
UNDER-SERVED GROUPS/ TRANSIENT LOW INCOME ORGANIZATIONS	HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS GENERAL UNDER SERVED GROUPS
ETHNIC/MINORITY GROUPS	CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES
ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	ALABAMA PARTNERS FOR CLEAN AIR GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
ELECTED OFFICIALS	MAYORS COUNTY COMMISSIONS STATE LEGISLATORS FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVES CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENTS
SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES - NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS	SENIOR CENTERS HISTORICAL PRESERVATION
HEALTH / MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS	
TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	FREIGHT MOVEMENT
LARGE EMPLOYERS (over 150)	
TRANSPORTATION GROUPS	BJCTA BOARD BJCTA PARATRANSIT AND TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL CLASTRAN BOARD HORIZON 280 ASSOCIATION PROGRESS 280 ASSOCIATION NORTHERN BELTLINE STAKEHOLDERS GROUP AIRPORT AUTHORITIES
EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Public Access to Information

The Metropolitan Planning Organization shall provide public access to technical and policy information used to develop Long-Range Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs. Timely information about transportation issues and processes shall also be made available to citizens, affected public agencies, private transportation providers, and other segments of the community.

Regular Meeting Announcements

The MPO regularly announces the MPO, the Transportation Citizens Committee, the Transportation Technical Committee and other meetings, as required. Meeting notices are regularly submitted to the media.

Legal Advertisements

The MPO uses paid advertisements for public involvement meetings in major newspapers in the Jefferson and Shelby County area and largest minority based publication.

Newsletter

The RPC staff produces a monthly electronic newsletter (*Connections Update*) that is distributed to interested citizens as well as representatives of advocacy groups, elected officials, municipalities, the media, private entities and other agencies. Citizens are added to the distribution list, by their own request. Opportunities to request being added to the distribution list occur during public meetings hosted by the MPO, on the MPO web site,

and when citizens contact the MPO staff. Each issue of the newsletter includes staff contact information, upcoming meeting schedules, the MPO web site address, project highlights, and current planning project status reports. When appropriate, information regarding significant transportation issues, MPO awards, and other one-time activities are included. An important goal of the newsletter is to inform the public of upcoming decisions to be made by the MPO or other agencies, so that they have time to prepare meaningful comments prior to the decision being finalized. Hard copies are placed in the reception area of the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham's headquarters.

Project Specific Newsletters

For individual projects (i.e. corridor studies) that are typically performed using consulting services, newsletters are often used to address specific project issues. These newsletters are mailed to targeted residents, businesses and property owners in the area that are expected to be impacted by a particular project or program. Information regarding upcoming project meetings, alternatives being proposed in the area, and other related project news is reported in these newsletters.

Other Newsletters

When project specific newsletters are not used, articles may be prepared for publication in other newsletters produced by municipalities, homeowner associations, church groups, civic groups, or others that may have an interest in the projects. These articles are subject to the publication dates and space restrictions of the individual publishers.

Direct Mailings

Direct mailings are used to announce upcoming meetings or activities or to provide information to a targeted area or group of people. Direct mailings include postcards, letters or flyers. An area may be targeted for a direct mailing because of a potential impact(s) from a project. Groups are targeted that may have an interest in a specific issue.

Press Releases

Formal press releases are sent to local media (newspaper, television and radio) to announce upcoming meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by the MPO or their committees.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Local television and radio stations provide airtime for PSAs used to promote MPO related programs.

Project Specific Websites

For individual projects (i.e. corridor studies) that are typically performed using consulting services, project specific web sites are often used. These sites are used when project information is too extensive to be included on the MPO web site. Project web sites can contain study area maps, meeting announcements, descriptions of potential alternatives,

comment forms, user surveys and project team contact information. Links to project web sites are provided on the MPO web site.

Project Workshops / Open Houses

These are public meetings that are generally open and informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis, and/or through an open microphone. Short presentations may be given at these meetings. Project specific meetings provide information to the public and are used to solicit public comment(s).

Community Outreach

During projects such as planning studies, targeted meetings are held with specific small groups that have an interest in the project. Meetings could be with homeowner or neighborhood associations, civic groups, special interest groups, municipal and county planners and engineers, or other groups of affected or interested parties. Projects related to the City of Birmingham should be coordinated with their Community Development Department and their Planning, Engineering and Permits Department.

Speakers Bureau

The face-to-face communications available through public speaking assures the greatest opportunity to inform the public and encourage their involvement in the transportation planning process. MPO staff schedule speaking engagements before civic, community and business groups interested in transportation issues and related topics in Jefferson and Shelby County. This provides a forum for groups to learn about transportation planning issues, including long and short term projects. Additionally, educational talks are offered which can address various topics.

E-mail Announcements

Meeting announcements and MPO information is e-mailed to interested individuals and groups who have submitted their e-mail address to MPO staff.

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets are used to provide summary information regarding MPO policy, programs and projects. Fact sheets can be distributed at public meetings, on the MPO web site, and in public places such as libraries and community centers. Individuals and special interest groups may request fact sheets directly from the MPO staff office. Informational items may provide background information on an upcoming planning project or activity, or be used as general educational material.

Notices, Posters and Flyers

Posters and flyers are used to announce meetings and events and are distributed for display in public places such as municipal buildings (i.e. city halls), libraries and community centers. Special interest groups, homeowner associations and individuals may request posters and flyers for distribution and display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of the meeting, the time(s) and location(s), contact information and website address where additional information can be obtained. Posters

and flyers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using direct mailings, newsletters, e-mails, etc. All meeting notices shall include a point of contact for any person requiring special arrangements related to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Notification of need shall occur no less than seven days prior to the date of the scheduled meeting so that necessary special arrangements can be made in order to facilitate participation.

MPO Logo

A logo representing the MPO is used to identify products and publications of the MPO. A logo helps the public become familiar with the different activities of the MPO by providing a means of recognizing MPO products.

Comment Forms

Comment forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues presented at a workshop, open house or other public meeting. Comment forms may be very general in nature, or may ask for very specific feedback. Comment forms may also be included in publications and on web sites to solicit input regarding the subject of the publication and/or the format of the publication or web site.

Surveys

Surveys are used when very specific input from the public is desired. A survey can be used in place of comment cards to ask very specific questions, such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys are also used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns. Another use of surveys can be gathering information to develop community characteristic inventories which will assist the MPO in making transportation decisions that compliment the values and desires of the citizens of Jefferson and Shelby County.

Visualization

To strengthen participation in the planning process and to aid the public in understanding proposed plans, the MPO will use techniques in a clear and easily accessible format such as maps, pictures and/or displays, to promote improved understanding of existing or proposed transportation plans and programs.

2.5 Open Meetings

All meeting associated with the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization are open to the public in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act No. 2005-40 which sets forth the general rule of law for Open Meetings.

3.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETINGS

A public involvement meeting shall be held for the following transportation planning activities identified in 23 CFR Part 450, 49 CFR Part 613, and 40 CFR Part 93:

- (1) Long-Range Transportation Plan adoptions and subsequent revisions or amendments, unless the revision merely adds or deletes exempt projects listed in 93.126 or 93.127.
- (2) An amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program which (a) result in a project with design concept and scope significantly different from that in the transportation plan or TIP (93.107), and (b) are not fiscally constrained according to the metropolitan planning regulations of 23 CFR Part 450 (93.108). A public involvement meeting may not be conducted for administrative modifications to the Transportation Improvement Program to include the addition of work scopes not anticipated in the original document, changes in funding categories, changes in year programmed, changes in estimated costs.
- (3) Provide for an additional opportunity for public comment if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts (23 CFR 450.316(1)(viii)) and when significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (23 CFR 450.316 (a)(2)).

Following the MPO Subcommittee's review and adoption of any draft document that requires a public involvement meeting, a public involvement meeting shall be scheduled and held in accordance with these procedures.

The public involvement meetings shall be sponsored by the Metropolitan Planning Organization and be conducted in a format structured to provide (1) presentation and discussion in a group setting, and (2) individual discussion with MPO representatives. The facilitator has the right to set a time limit for comments to ensure fair representation. The Transportation Citizens Committee shall provide guidance to the MPO in the structure for the conduct of the public participation meeting. All meetings will be held in locations that meet Americans with Disabilities (ADA) accessibility requirements (Pub. L. 101-336, 104 Stat. 327, as amended) and U.S. DOT regulations "Transportation for Individuals With Disabilities" (49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38).

Information addressing how to become a member of the Transportation Citizens Committee shall be made available at the public meetings.

3.1 Meeting Guidelines

The MPO logo and website address shall be used in all notifications where feasible. All meeting notices will include a point of contact for any person requiring special arrangements related to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Notification of need shall occur no less than seven days prior to the date of the scheduled meeting so that necessary special arrangements can be made in order to facilitate participation.

A Minimum of Four Weeks Prior to Meeting Date

1. Flyers are given to members of the TCC to be distributed through their networks. Included in the networks are presidents of each neighborhood association who are asked to include the flyer in the monthly neighborhood newsletter or make an announcement at their meeting.
2. The intent of the flyer is to provide attractive, eye-catching material which will convey the purpose of the public participation meeting.

Two Weeks Prior to Meeting Date

1. Publication shall be in newspapers of general circulation in Jefferson and Shelby counties and by additional means and methods. Selection of the publications for paid advertising will be based on meeting subject, area impacted and Environmental Justice guidelines.
2. A media release announcing the meeting is sent to all publications.
3. Flyers are displayed in the determined meeting place location and distributed to relevant public libraries in Jefferson and Shelby County. These flyers are to be posted in conspicuous places for easy observation by members of the community.
4. The meeting is announced on the MPO website
5. A letter requesting attendance is distributed to each member of the MPO, TTC and TCC.
6. Postcards are mailed to all parties located in the MPO database to include but not limited to major community organizations, including those representing the physically disadvantaged.

One Day Before the Meeting

1. The information to be distributed at the public involvement meeting shall be available to the public at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
2. The broadcast media, television and radio stations are all notified of the meeting and requested to cover the meeting proceedings held the next day.

3.2 Public Involvement Effectiveness

After each meeting an evaluation process will be conducted. Evaluation factors will include the following:

Quantitative Indicators:

1. Attendance demographics derived from attendance sign-in sheet.
2. Website hits from the date the first announcement is made to the end of the comment period.

3. Oral and written communications received prior to and following the meeting.
4. Listing of media articles and contact.
5. Meeting structure evaluation form results.
6. Public involvement questionnaires collected.
7. Comment forms returned.
8. Comments recorded and issues raised during the meeting.
9. Number of requests to be added to the mailing list or to become a member of the citizens committee.

Qualitative Indicators:

1. Met legal requirements and guidelines set forth in this document.
2. Clearly articulated goals and objectives.
3. Included political participation.
4. Identified and reached out to appropriate publics.
5. Engaged attendees in the process and discussion.
6. Developed and distributed clear and concise materials.
7. Listened to and responded clearly to questions.
8. Increased education and awareness of the transportation planning process and issues.
9. Provided adequate financial support, staff and time.

At each meeting, three forms will be distributed to the attendees.

1. A meeting evaluation form which will elicit response as to how attendees heard about the meeting and their review of the format and implementation.
2. A comment sheet made available to anyone not wishing to address their question during the meeting or needing additional information on any transportation subject.

3.3 Documentation of Public Involvement Meeting

The process used to address individual comments will include:

1. Documenting the written comments provided by those attending the public involvement meeting. A name and address shall be provided in order for a comment to be documented. Comments by the public concerning the material provided at the public involvement meeting shall be submitted on a form, recorded by staff at the meetings or received via mail (postal or electronic) within 21 calendar days of the public involvement meeting. If unable to attend the meeting, comments can be submitted online. These comments shall be summarized by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham and included in the written report. If the assistance of other parties is required in order to respond to a public comment, the parties shall be notified in writing by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham.
2. The written report for the public involvement meeting shall include a record of outreach, a record of attendance, a summary of material distributed and displayed at the public involvement meeting, a summary of comments, and the number of persons making comments or asking questions. A draft written report for the public involvement meeting shall then be provided to the Transportation Citizens Committee

within 30 days following the close of the comment period followed by a presentation to the Transportation Technical Committee and to the Metropolitan Planning Organization Subcommittee.

3. The parties identified in the Alabama Criteria and Interagency Consultation Procedures for the Determination of the Conformity of Metropolitan Planning Organization Plans, Programs and Projects shall be invited to attend the meetings of the Transportation Citizens Committee, Transportation Technical Committee and MPO Subcommittee that reviews the report for all public involvement meetings. It is this meeting in which conflicts raised during the public involvement meeting shall be discussed. A final written report for the public involvement meeting and the recommendations of the Metropolitan Planning Organization subcommittee shall then be submitted to the full Metropolitan Planning Organization. Adoption of the final plan shall be by official action recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
4. The final written report shall also be available to the public by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. Copies of the written report shall be available for distribution by local governments and libraries of major jurisdictions in the Metropolitan Planning Area upon request. One copy of each report will be sent to the Central Library in Downtown Birmingham. All reports will be posted on the MPO website as well.

4.0 REVISIONS TO PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES

The public involvement process outlined herein shall be used when modifications are proposed to be made to the procedures. A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration for informational purposes and shall be posted on the MPO website to the maximum extent practicable.

5.0 TRANSPORTATION TERMS AND ACRONYMS

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: Federal law that requires public facilities (including transportation services) to be accessible to persons with disabilities including those with mental disabilities, temporary disabilities, and the conditions related to substance abuse.

ADT - Average Daily Traffic: The number of vehicles passing a fixed point in a day, averaged over a number of days. The number of count days included in the average varies with the intended use of data.

ALDOT –Alabama Department of Transportation: the transportation planning agency for the state of Alabama. ALDOT manages federal and state funding, often applied in combination with local funding, for transportation projects across the state.

AVL – Automated Vehicle Locator: A device that makes use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) to enable a business or agency to remotely track the location of its vehicle fleet by using the Internet.

AVO - Average Vehicle Occupancy: The ratio of person trips to vehicle trips; often used as a criteria in judging the success of trip reduction programs.

BJCTA –Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority: The public transit agency serving the City of Birmingham and Jefferson County

BRT – Bus Rapid Transit: A high speed bus system operated within an exclusive right-of-way. BRT incorporates exclusive transit ways, modern stations, on-board fare collection, high-tech vehicles and frequent service. BRT systems can be built incrementally and designed for vehicles - rather than people - transfer from local bus routes to the high speed lines.

CAAA - Clean Air Act Amendments: 1990 amendments to the federal Clean Air Act which classify non-attainment areas and provide for rules dealing with air pollution in such areas; specifically brought transportation decisions into the context of air quality control.

CMAQ - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program: A categorical funding program created under ISTEA, which directs funding to projects that contribute to meeting national air quality standards in non-attainment areas for ozone and carbon monoxide.

CMP - Congestion Management Process (previously known as Congestion Management System): A systematic process required under SAFETEA-LU for all TMAs that shall address congestion management through the metropolitan planning process that provides for effective management and operation, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 and chapter 53 of title 49 through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies. The CMP is required under 23 CFR 500.109 and shall include methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multi-modal transportation system, identify causes of congestion, identify and evaluate alternative actions, provide information supporting the implementation of actions, and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation actions. The CMP is periodically reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness of the implemented strategies, the results of this evaluation shall be

provided to decision-makers to provide guidance on selection of effective strategies for future implementation purposes.

CONST – Construction (phase of a project): The phase of a project after the preliminary environmental and engineering work is completed, where the project is being built and the improvements are prepared for implementation.

DOT - Department of Transportation: Agency responsible for transportation at the local, state, or federal level. For title 23 U.S.C. federal-aid highway actions, this would mean the Federal Highway Administration and for federal-aid transit actions under title 49 U.S.C, this would mean the Federal Transit Administration.

E+C – Existing plus Committed Transportation Network: Also called a No-Build network, this is a test of how a roadway network, consisting of an existing network plus currently funded future roadway projects, could withstand the demand of projected population and employment growth.

EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment: The process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social, and other relevant effects of development proposals prior to major decisions being taken and commitments made. The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that decision-makers consider environmental impacts before deciding whether to proceed with new projects

EIS - Environmental Impact Statement: A National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document that explains the purpose and need for a project, presents project alternatives, analyzes the likely impact of each, explains the choice of a preferred alternative, and finally details measures to be taken in order to mitigate the impacts of the preferred alternative.

EJ - Environmental Justice: Derived from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and established by Executive Order, EJ requires federally funded plans and programs to assess their impact, either positive or negative, on traditionally underserved (e.g., low-income, minority, etc.) communities or segments of the population. The goal of EJ is to ensure public involvement of low income and minority groups in decision making to prevent disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low income and minority groups, and to ensure that these groups receive equal benefits from transportation improvements.

EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: is an agency of the federal government of the United States charged with protecting human health and with safeguarding the natural environment: air, water, and land.

FHPP - Federal High Priority Projects: Discretionary projects earmarked by the U.S.Congress as high priorities at the federal level during the Congressional appropriations and reauthorization process. This amounts to roughly 5% of the total transportation budget.

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration: Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation responsible for administering federal highway transportation programs under title 23 U.S.C.

Fiscal Constraint: A requirement, originally of ISTEA, that all plans be financially – constrained, balanced expenditures to reasonably expected sources of funding over the period of the TIP or Long-Range Transportation Plan.

FTA - Federal Transit Administration: Federal entity responsible for transit planning and programs under title 49 U.S.C.

Functional Classification: Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Basic to this process is the recognition that individual roads and streets do not serve travel independently in any major way. Rather, most travel involves movement through a network of roads. It becomes necessary then to determine how this travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of this channelization process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a highway network.

FY - Fiscal Year: A federal fiscal or budget year; runs from October 1 through September 30 for the MPO and the federal government.

GIS – Geographic Information System: a system for capturing, storing, analyzing and managing data which is spatially referenced to the earth. GIS is a tool that allows users to create interactive queries (user created searches), analyze the spatial information, edit data, maps, and present the results of all these operations.

HOV - High Occupancy Vehicle: In Alabama, vehicles carrying two (2) or more people receive this designation and may travel on freeways, expressways and other large volume roads in lanes designated for high occupancy vehicles. Motorcycles are also authorized to use these lanes.

IM – Interstate Maintenance: A funding category created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the IM authorizes funding for activities that include the reconstruction of bridges, interchanges, and over crossings along existing Interstate routes, including the acquisition of right-of-way where necessary, but shall not include the construction of new travel lanes other than high occupancy vehicle lanes or auxiliary lanes.

IMS - Incident Management System: A systematic process required under SAFETELU to provide information on accidents and identify causes and improvements to the Transportation system to increase safety of all users.

ISTEA - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991: Federal law which restructured transportation planning and funding by requiring consideration of multimodal solutions, emphasis on the movement of people and goods as opposed to traditional highway investments, flexibility in the use of transportation funds, a greater role of MPOs, and a greater emphasis on public participation.

ITE - Institute of Transportation Engineers: An international society of professionals in transportation and traffic engineering; publishes Trip Generation (a manual of trip generation rates by land use type).

ITS - Intelligent Transportation System: Use of computer and communications technology to facilitate the flow of information between travelers and system operators to improve mobility and transportation productivity, enhance safety, maximize the use of existing transportation facilities, conserve energy resources and reduce adverse environmental effects; includes concepts such as “freeway management systems,” “automated fare collection” and “transit information kiosks.”

Intergovernmental Agreement: Legal instrument describing tasks to be accomplished and/or funds to be paid between government agencies.

LOS - Level of Service: A qualitative assessment of a road's operating condition, generally described using a scale of A (little congestion) to E/F (severe congestion).

LRT – Light Rail Transit: a particular class of urban and suburban passenger railway that utilizes equipment and infrastructure that is typically less massive than that used for rapid transit systems, with modern light rail vehicles usually running along the system.

LRTP – Long-Range Transportation Plan: A document resulting from regional or statewide collaboration and consensus on a region or state's transportation system, and serving as the defining vision for the region's or state's transportation systems and services. In metropolitan areas, the plan indicates all of the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next 20 years. It is fiscally constrained, i.e., a given program or project can reasonably expect to receive funding within the time allotted for its implementation.

MG - Minimum Guarantee: A funding category created in TEA-21 that guarantees a 90% return of contributions on formula funds to every state.

MPO Activities: Plans, programs and projects related to the MPO process.

MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization: The forum for cooperative transportation decision-making; required for urbanized areas with populations over 50,000.

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act: Passed in 1970, NEPA requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions.

NHS - National Highway System: Specific major roads to be designated September 30, 1995; the NHS will consist of 155,000 (plus or minus 15%) miles of road and represents one category of roads eligible for federal funds under ISTEA.

NO_x – Nitrous Oxide: The third largest greenhouse gas, nitrous oxide also attacks ozone in the stratosphere, aggravating the excess amount of UV light striking the earth's surface.

Obligated Funds: Funds that have been authorized by and committed to legally by a federal agency to pay for the federal share of the project cost.

Officials: Are people who have governmental decision-making, planning or administrative responsibilities that relate to MPO activities.

PE – Preliminary Engineering (phase of project): a process to begin developing the design of the facilities and system, to analyze the function and operation of the system, evaluation cost efficiencies and prepare for the final design of the project.

PMS - Pavement Management System: A systematic process utilized by state agencies and MPOs to analyze and summarize pavement information for use in selecting and implementing cost-effective pavement construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance programs; required for roads in the National Highway System as a part of ISTEA; the extent to which the remaining public roads are included in the process is left to the discretion of state and local officials; criteria found in 23 CFR 500.021-209.

Public: Includes citizens, public agencies, advocacy groups and the private sectors that have an interest in or may be affected by MPO activities.

Public Participation: Is an integral part of a planning or major decision-making process. It provides opportunities for the public to be involved with the MPO in an exchange of

data and ideas. Public participation offers an open process in which the rights of the community, to be informed to provide comments to the Government and to receive a response from the Government, are met through a full opportunity to be involved and to express needs and goals.

ROW - Right-of-Way: Real property that is used for transportation purposes; defines the extent of the corridor that can be used for the road and associated drainage.

RTDM - Regional Travel Demand Model: This is a tool for forecasting impacts of urban developments on travel patterns as well as testing various transportation alternative solutions to traffic patterns. The travel patterns are determined from US Census results and in simple terms tell where residents live and where they go to work or school on a regional wide basis.

SAFETEA-LU - Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users: legislation enacted August 10, 2005, as Public Law 109-59. SAFETEA-LU authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009.

SIP – State Implementation Plan (for air quality): the regulations and other materials for meeting clean air standards and associated Clean Air Act requirements.

SR – State Route: a roadway owned, financed and maintained by a state.

STA – State gas tax fund: Also called motor fuel excise tax, this is a tax charged by the gallon and collected as consumers pay at the pump. The tax goes primarily towards basic operating costs, highway maintenance contracts, resurfacing, bridges, major reconstruction, new construction, consultant contracts, right-of-way purchases, and to match federal funds.

STIP - State Transportation Improvement Program: The ALDOT Five Year Work Program as prescribed by federal law.

STP – Surface Transportation Program (L-STP or U-STP): A program funded by the National Highway Trust Fund. **L-STP** provides funding to areas of 5,000 to 50,000 in population for improvements on routes functionally classified urban collectors or higher. **U-STP** Provides funding to Census designated urbanized areas over 50,000 in population (e.g. MPO areas based on US Census) for improvements on routes functionally classified

TDM – Transportation Demand Management: a method of planning for and implementing transportation improvement in a manner that reduces traffic congestion and pollution by influencing changes in travel behavior.

Transportation Disadvantaged: People who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation due to disability, income status or age.

Transportation Enhancements: Specific activities which can be funded with Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds; activities include pedestrian/bicycle facilities, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic historic sites, scenic or historic highway programs, scenic beautification, historic preservation, rehabilitation/operation of historic transportation structures, railway corridor preservation, control/removal of outdoor advertising, archeological planning/research and mitigation of highway runoff water pollution.

TEA-21 - Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century: Federal Legislation that authorized funds for all modes of transportation and guidelines on the use of those funds. Successor to ISTEA, the landmark legislation clarified the role of the MPOs in the local

priority setting process. TEA-21 emphasized increased public involvement, simplicity, flexibility, fairness, and higher funding levels for transportation.

TIP - Transportation Improvement Program: A priority list of transportation projects developed by a metropolitan planning organization that is to be carried out within the four (4) year period following its adoption; must include documentation of federal and state funding sources for each project and be consistent with adopted MPO long range transportation plans and local government comprehensive plans.

TMA - Transportation Management Area: An area designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation given to all urbanized areas with a population over 200,000 (or other area when requested by the Governor and MPO); these areas must comply with special transportation planning requirements regarding congestion management systems, project selection and certification; requirements identified in 23 CFR - 450.300-33.6.

TSM - Transportation Systems Management: Strategies to improve the efficiency of the transportation system through operational improvements such as the use of bus reserved lanes, signalization, access management, turn restrictions, etc. urban collectors or higher.

TTC – Transportation Technical Committee: A standing committee of most metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs); function is to provide advice on plans or actions of the MPO from planners, engineers and other staff members (not general citizens).

UPWP - Unified Planning Work Program: Developed by Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs); identifies all transportation and planning activities anticipated within the next one to two years, including a schedule for the completion of the identified tasks and activities.

V/C Ratio Volume over Capacity Ratio: This is a roadway performance measure to show how a highway volume compares with a highway's capacity.

VMT - Vehicle Miles Traveled: This is an output of the travel demand model and is a measure of traffic flow over a highway segment. While 1000 vehicles traveling over a mile road and 1 vehicle traveling over 1000 miles are mathematically.

VOC – Volatile Organic Compounds: are organic chemical compounds that have high enough vapor pressures under normal conditions to significantly vaporize and enter the atmosphere. Included among these compounds are dry-cleaning solvents and some constituents of petroleum fuels.