

Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO)

2013

***Public Participation Plan
(PPP)***



Prepared by the Staff of the City of Gadsden Transportation Department for
the Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization

March 2014

2013
Public Participation Plan (PPP)
Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning
Organization (GEMPO)

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Amendment date(s):

This document was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), and local governments, in fulfillment of requirements set forth in 23 USC 134 and 135, amended by MAP-21 Sections 1201 and 1202, July 2012. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

**Gadsden / Etowah Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
(GEMPO) Voting Members**

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Larry Means
Mayor, City of Attalla

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Mayor, City of Rainbow City

Chad Hare, City Engineer
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Randall Scott
Mayor, City of Reece City

Nick Hall, City Planner
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Wally Burns
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*Seven (7) voting members required for a quorum

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(GEMPO) Non-Voting Members**

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Bureau Chief, Transportation Planning
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Mark Bartlett, Administrator
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James W. (Bill) Curtis
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Regional Planning and Development
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Joe Roberson
Mayor, City of Ohatchee

John McHugh
Mayor, City of Steele

GEMPO Committee Members
Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Advisory Committee (BPGAC)
Voting Members

Roger Silvey, Chairman City of Hokes Bluff	Mike Barber City of Glencoe
Heidi Darbo, Vice-Chairperson City of Gadsden	Vacant City of Hokes Bluff
Charles Shaw City of Attalla	Liz Bright City of Rainbow City
Paul Gore City of Attalla	Vacant City of Rainbow City
Steve Garrison Etowah County	Vacant City of Reece City
Vacant Etowah County	Vacant City of Reece City
Ed Whatley City of Gadsden	Joe Battles City of Southside
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*Four (4) voting members required for a quorum.

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) Voting Member

Barry Hill, Chairman City of Glencoe	Vacant City of Glencoe
Preston Nix, Vice-Chairman City of Attalla	Jeff Cheatwood City of Hokes Bluff
Richard Bradfield City of Attalla	Myra Whitt City of Hokes Bluff
Vacant Etowah County	Tom Barnes City of Gadsden
Vacant Etowah County	Vacant (2) City of Reece City
Vacant City of Gadsden	Vacant (2) City of Southside
Anita Bedwell City of Rainbow City	

*Four (4) voting members required for a quorum.

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Voting Members

Meinrad Tabengwa, Chairman
Transportation Planner, City of
Gadsden

Nick Hall
Director of Planning, City of
Gadsden

Terry John Calhoun
Chairman, Gadsden / Etowah MPO

Chad Hare
City Engineer, City of Gadsden

*Five (5) voting members required for a quorum.

Tim Graves
Engineer, Etowah County

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Mike McCain
Gadsden / Etowah Industrial
Development Authority

RESOLUTION 0314-01

Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO)
Adopting the 2013 Public Participation Plan (PPP)

WHEREAS, the Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO) is the organization designated by the Governor of the State of Alabama as being responsible, together with the State of Alabama, for implementing the applicable provisions of amended 23 USC 134 and 135 (amended by MAP-21 Section 1201 and 1202, July 2012); 42 USC 2000d-1, 7401; 23 CFR 450 and 500; CFR 51 and 93; and

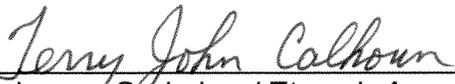
WHEREAS, Title 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1) et al, provides that the MPOs must prepare a participation plan to describe the process to ensure all citizens have reasonable opportunities to be involved in transportation planning, defines the segments of population to be included in that process, and further describes the means, methods and formats used in providing those opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in meeting requirements of 450.316(a)(1)(ix), the MPO agrees to periodically review the effectiveness of procedures and strategies intended to provide full and open access to all citizens; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 450.316(a)(3), the MPO has provided a public comment period of forty-five (45) days for review of the draft PPP prior to final MPO approval; and

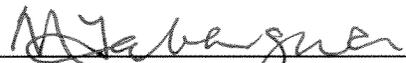
WHEREAS, consistent with the declaration of the above provisions, the Gadsden / Etowah Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, in consultation with the Alabama Department of Transportation, has prepared the 2013 Public Participation Plan; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gadsden / Etowah Area Metropolitan Planning Organization has reviewed its public participation procedures, hereafter referred to as the 2013 Public Participation Plan (PPP), to ensure that full and open access to the transportation planning process is provided to all citizens, that it maintains consistency with federal and state requirements, and it improves and streamlines the public involvement process.



Chairman, Gadsden / Etowah Area MPO

Date 3-13-14



Chairman, GEMPO/TCC

Date 3/13/14

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1.0 Purpose

It is the intent of the Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO) to provide every opportunity for the involvement of citizens, as well as staff and elected officials, in the transportation planning process. Recognizing the importance of public involvement, the GEMPO will implement the procedures outlined herein to ensure that the public is fully informed about transportation issues and is given reasonable public access to transportation plans and project documents, and that the public has adequate opportunities to express their opinions and concerns about transportation issues in an orderly manner in an appropriate forum. The requirements for a Public Participation Plan (PPP) are detailed in the provisions of amended 23 USC 134 and 135 (amended by Moving Ahead for Process in the 21st Century - MAP-21 Section 1201 and 1202, July 2012); 42 USC 2000d-1, 7401; 23 CFR 450 and 500; CFR 51 and 93.

2.0 Metropolitan Planning Organization

2.1 Metropolitan Planning Process

The Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO) is the organization responsible for transportation planning in the Gadsden and Etowah area. The GEMPO signed its initial joint agreement concerning the transportation planning process with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) in 1975, in accordance with the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962. The 1962 Act specified that urbanized areas (population greater than 50,000) must develop a "3C transportation planning process:" a process that is comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing, for federal-aid projects approved after July 1, 1965. A new agreement stipulating the various duties and responsibilities of the parties involved was signed with the ALDOT in May / June 2007. The foregoing is required under these statutes: MAP-21§§ 1105, 1201; 23 USC 104, 134; 23 CFR Part 450.

2.2 GEMPO Structure

The GEMPO consists of the Policy (Voting) Board, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Advisory Committee (BPGAC). The 2010 Census established the population of the Etowah Area urbanized area at 104,430. The Gadsden / Etowah urbanized area encompasses portions of Etowah County and the cities of Attalla, Gadsden, Glencoe, Hokes Bluff, Southside, Rainbow City and Reece City.

The GEMPO Policy Board serves as the official policy and decision-making body of the Gadsden / Etowah Area MPO. Through the transportation planning process, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), Citizen's

Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Advisory Committee (BPGAC) advise the GEMPO Policy Board about transportation projects and programs. The GEMPO Board submits approved projects and programs to the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. GEMPO Policy Board members are designated by their elected positions in several jurisdictions and professional positions at the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. The GEMPO Policy Board comprises of twelve voting members.

2.3 GEMPO Committees

2.3.1 The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

The TCC provides technical assistance and input in the various planning elements involved in the transportation planning process. The TCC members are designated by their professional positions in the member governments, the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and associations who have technical knowledge of transportation or planning.

2.3.2 The Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC)

This committee serves as a formal means through which citizens may participate in the transportation planning process. The CAC offers opinions and suggestions to the TCC and GEMPO Policy Board on transportation planning documents, projects and issues. The CAC consists of ten (10) private citizens representing the elected GEMPO members' areas.

2.3.3 The Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Advisory Committee (BPGAC)

The BPGAC serves as a formal means through which citizens may participate in the alternative transportation planning process. The BPGAC offers opinions and suggestions to the TCC and GEMPO Policy Board on transportation planning documents, projects and issues relating to bicycle facilities / amenities, trail ways, greenways and other issues primarily dealing with alternative transportation. The BPGAC consists of ordinary citizens nominated by the elected GEMPO members.

3.0 Regulatory Requirements

3.1 Scope of the Planning Process

Map-21 retains the SAFETEA-LU Planning Factors as Scope of the Planning Process. The eight factors themselves remain unchanged and the GEMPO considers the factors during all program and project review and development. The three landmark bills that brought surface transportation into the 21st century – the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), shaped the highway program to meet the nation’s changing transportation needs.

MAP-21 addresses the many challenges facing our transportation system today – challenges such as improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment – as well as laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges. MAP-21 requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to consider planning strategies that will serve to advance eight transportation-planning factors identified under MAP-21 as follows:

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 the 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.

3.2 Public Participation Provisions

3.2.1 Parties to be engaged in the Process

Originating with SAFETEA-LU and endorsed by MAP-21, the transportation legislation expands the listing of interested parties to

be engaged during the development of the Public Participation Plan, the short-term and long-term transportation plans. All these interested parties shall be afforded reasonable opportunities to comment on projects contained in the short-term and long-term transportation plans:

- Affected public agencies
- Freight shippers
- Private providers of transportation
- Providers of freight transportation services
- Representative of public transportation employees
- Representatives of disabled individuals
- Representatives of users of public transportation
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways
- Representatives of and bicycle transportation facilities
- Other interested parties

3.2.2 Agencies to Be Engaged In the Process

Various provisions of MAP-21 require expanded consultation and cooperation with Federal, State, Local and Tribal agencies responsible for land use, natural resources and other environmental issues during the adoption of long and short-term plans. The MPO shall consult with agencies responsible for historic preservation, natural resource conservation, environmental protection, and land use management, as appropriate, in the development of the short and long-term transportation plans. The following is a list of federal, state, local and tribal agencies which the Gadsden/Etowah MPO or the Alabama Department of Transportation may consult with:

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- General Land Office
- Local Historical Agencies
- Local Parks and Recreation Departments
- Gadsden Etowah Chamber of Commerce
- Gadsden Etowah Commercial Development Corporation
- Planning & Zoning Commissions
- Alabama Department Environmental Management (ADEM)
- Alabama Historical Commission
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Tribal Agencies

In conjunction with the development of the long-term plan, Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), environmental mitigation shall be discussed. A general discussion of potential environmental impacts, avoidance and mitigation activities shall be developed by the Gadsden / Etowah MPO in consultation with federal, state, tribal agencies, environmental and other regulatory agencies. This discussion shall be included in the LRTP and shall be directed at the policy or strategy level, not project specific.

Another element of MAP-21 emphasizes consultation with other planning agencies that have direct or indirect ties to transportation planning. The GEMPO will expand, as appropriate, the methods to improve coordination with land use and economic development planning. As part of the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update, the planning process will promote consistency of the transportation plans with state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

In order to better communicate transportation plans with the general public, MAP-21 also emphasizes the use of visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques may include charts and graphs, tables, Geographic Information System (GIS) maps overlaid with data, computer simulation, photo manipulation and static maps. The intent for this technique is to better depict the programs and their impact on the public. The Gadsden / Etowah MPO will utilize visualization techniques during the development of the short-term and long-term transportation plans.

3.2.3 Consistency with Other Plans

Another element of MAP-21 emphasizes consultation with other planning agencies that have direct or indirect ties to transportation planning. The GEMPO will expand, as appropriate, the methods to improve coordination with land use and economic development planning. As part of the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update, the planning process will promote consistency of the transportation plans with state and local planned growth and economic development patterns. Consistency is addressed in the Codes of Federal Regulations under 23 CFR 450.208 (Statewide) and 450.316(b) (Metropolitan Planning).

In order to better communicate transportation plans with the general public, MAP-21 also emphasizes the use of visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques may include charts and graphs, tables, Geographic Information System (GIS) maps overlaid with data, computer simulation, photo manipulation and static maps. The intent for this technique is to

better depict the programs and their impact on the public. The Gadsden / Etowah MPO will utilize visualization techniques during the development of the short-term and long-term transportation plans.

3.3 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.

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

As a measure of sustainability of these principles, the GEMPO will provide the following **Livability Indicators**:

- 1) Percent increase in trips by transit and other non-vehicle modes.
- 2) Percent increase in trips by for low income and non-vehicle owning population.
- 3) Percent increase of workforce living within a thirty (30) minute or less commute from primary job centers.
- 4) Percent increase in funding that enhances accessibility of existing transportation systems.
- 5) Percent increase in leveraged funding sources for transportation projects.
- 6) Percent increase of households within walking distance of recreational amenities and schools.

Note: The Livability Indicators are located in Appendix G.

4.0 Civil Rights

4.1 Title VI and Environmental Justice

Title VI of the 1962 Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) states, "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to the discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." President Bill Clinton's Executive Order (EO) issued on

Environmental Justice in 1999 further amplifies Title VI by providing that “each federal agency shall make achieving Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” Its purpose is to focus federal attention on the environmental and human health effects of federal actions on minority and low-income populations with the goal of achieving environmental protection for all communities.

The EO directs federal agencies to identify and address the disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law.

4.2 Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Language Assistance Plan (LAP)

Title VI and its implementing regulations require that FTA recipients take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

FTA issued Circular C 4702.1B in October of 2012, requiring completion of a Four Factor Analysis of the Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Area to determine requirements for LEP compliance. Based on that analysis, the MPO has identified a population within the MPA that may require MPO assistance in participating in the planning process. Pursuant to Chapter III-8 b of the circular, the MPO must have a Language Assistance Plan (LAP). *“The DOT LEP Guidance recognizes that certain recipients, such as those serving very few LEP persons or those with very limited resources, may choose not to develop a written plan. However, FTA has determined it is necessary to require its recipients to develop an assistance plan in order to ensure compliance...”* A **Language Assistance Plan** has been developed by the Gadsden / Etowah MPO as follows:

- The secondary language population of Gadsden / Etowah is less than 5%.
- Based on percentage of population, document publication in the secondary language is not required.
- The MPO *will* provide language assistance for translation during meetings, or translation of documents if requested.
- Notice of language assistance is posted on the MPO website and with all meeting agendas in a secondary language.
- The MPO will monitor, evaluate, and update the LAP as needed.
- Periodic guidance by ALDOT, FHWA, and FTA may require changes to the Language Assistance Plan.
- Minor changes may be made to the LAP by the MPO without a formal amendment process.
- Review of the LAP may occur during draft development of the

- UPWP, Long Range Plan, and TIP.
- MPO staff will be trained to either assist those persons needing language assistance or direct them to those who can assist.
- Requests for translation assistance are subject to 48 hour notice.
- Title VI Complaint Forms will be made available in the second language.

During the development and adoption of transportation plans, policies and programs, it is the Gadsden / Etowah MPO's policy to ensure fair and full participation in the transportation planning process by all citizens who may be potentially affected. Further actions by the MPO are as follows:

- Public outreach to low-income and minority populations will be made by maintaining a distribution mailing list of community organizations and leaders, inviting them to public meetings or workshops, and speaking at community meetings.
- Public notices for adoption of new or major updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan or a new Transportation Improvement Program will be placed in at least one countywide newspaper and free local community newspapers, whenever possible, to reach the maximum extent of the low-income, minority citizens in the area.
- Notices will also be posted at areas frequented by the target population such as community centers, health clinics, and public housing authority offices.
- Prior to the adoption of new or major updates to planning documents, the GEMPO will identify low-income and minority populations by traffic analysis zones or by census tracts. This will ensure that the effects or burdens of transportation programs on these groups can be reviewed and addressed for equitable distribution throughout the planning area.
- Overall the GEMPO will adopt the Title VI Plan that was submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by the City of Gadsden in July 2013. Good faith efforts are still going to be undertaken to ensure that the GEMPO planning process and service delivery also cater to the LEP populations. The City of Gadsden Title VI LEP Plan is shown separately in Appendix C.

4.3 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. To comply with the regulatory requirements GEMPO will ensure that all meetings conducted under its auspices will take place in venues that are accessible to individuals with disabilities, mobility limitations or other impairments as required by the legislation: Section 504 of

the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794); sec. 16 (a) and (d) of the Federal Transit Act of 1964, as amended (49 U.S.C. 5310 (a) and (f); sec. 165(b) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, as amended (23 U.S.C. 142).

5.0 Procedures for Planning Documents Requiring Public Participation

The GEMPO will adhere to specific processes and/or procedures to ensure public participation during the preparation, adoption and dissemination of planning documents. Copies of planning documents and reports are available free of charge upon request in CD format. A token fee will be charged for printed copies.

5.1 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is an annual or biennial statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area. At a minimum, a UPWP includes a description of the planning work, the resulting products, who will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, the cost of the work, and the source(s) of funds. MPO are required to develop UPWPs to govern work programs for the expenditure of FHWA and FTA planning funds as required by 23 CFR 450.308) (b).

Considerable efforts will be made to encourage the public to participate in the Gadsden / Etowah MPO's transportation planning process. All Gadsden / Etowah Area MPO meetings are open to the public. At these meetings, the GEMPO committees will review and approve draft and final UPWP documents. Interested individuals may review and comment upon these documents in tandem with the GEMPO committees. Individuals may address their concerns to the GEMPO committees directly at any meetings they attend. Other measures to be taken to ensure wider public participation in the development of the UPWP will be as follows:

- The UPWP shall be available for a minimum public review and comment period of thirty (30) days after GEMPO Policy Board approval of the draft document.
- Comment forms shall be made available at the GEMPO Policy Board and Technical Coordinating Committee meetings as well as on the GEMPO website and may be presented to the GEMPO staff at any time during the thirty day comment period.
- Notices and agendas of meetings concerning the UPWP shall be posted on the GEMPO website.

- Members of the GEMPO staff shall be available to answer questions and hear comments from interested citizens at all scheduled meetings concerning the UPWP as well as at regularly scheduled GEMPO Policy Board meetings.
- The GEMPO shall consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities that are affected by transportation projects in the GEMPO Planning Area.
- When received, a summary, analysis, and a report on the disposition of written or oral comments shall be included in the final UPWP.
- The UPWP shall be placed on display in the following locations: Gadsden City Hall (Planning Dept.), Attalla City Hall, Hokes Bluff City Hall, Glencoe City Hall, Southside City Hall, Rainbow City Hall, Etowah County Courthouse, and the City of Gadsden Public Library. Digital copies can be downloaded from the GEMPO website.

5.2 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The GEMPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a long-range planning document, which identifies transportation projects and programs for the next twenty-five (25) years. The Plan addresses various aspects of transportation, such as: major streets and highways, traffic operations, maintenance, public transportation, freight, pedestrian and bicycle transportation. This long-term plan is updated every five years. In the event that the study area is designated non-attainment for air quality standards, then the plan would be updated every four years.

The development of the LRTP and all amendments shall meet all current Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and ALDOT requirements for public participation. The LRTP shall be open to public review and comment for a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to GEMPO approval. Development of the LRTP shall consider, at a minimum, the following opportunities for public participation:

- **Identification of Interested Parties**
 - Establish stakeholder listings, including Citizen Advisory Committees, Community Leaders, Chambers of Commerce, public and quasi-public organizations, housing authorities, users of alternate forms of transportation, freight interests, civic organizations, faith-based organizations, and state, federal, and local government agencies.

- Special outreach to low-income and minority populations within GEMPO that will include a list of business, and community leaders in areas with incomes below the GEMPO average and minority populations above the GEMPO average.
- Maintain contact information that includes telephone, address, or email listings.
- **Outreach**
 - Dissemination of newsletters and summaries.
 - Development of public information on the website.
 - Use of social media to provide timely updates.
 - At least three (3) open public meetings for public review and comment.
 - Member jurisdictions involved shall also notify citizens of public meetings and opportunity for public comment during regularly scheduled board and council meetings as well as distributing notification to community contacts via email.
 - Dissemination of media notifications to public news agencies in the GEMPO area.
- **A timely opportunity for public comment on the Draft LRTP will be made available during at least one TCC, CAC and BPGAC meeting**
- **The draft LRTP shall be open to public review and comment for no less than 45 days prior to approval by the TCC. The draft plan shall be advertised using the following:**
 - A notice published in at least one newspaper with regional coverage prior to initiation of the public comment period(s).
 - A notice published in at least one newspaper with circulations targeted at minority and/or low-income populations.
 - The Long Range Transportation Plan will be posted on the GEMPO Website (<http://www.gadsdenmpo.com>).
 - A media notification to local newspapers and other local media.
 - Additional regional newspapers and non-government organizations representing interested parties will be notified as deemed appropriate.
 - When significant formal comments are received, a summary, an analysis and a report will be submitted on the disposition of the comments.

5.3 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies and schedules prioritized and fully funded projects or programs to be constructed or implemented in the Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Area during the TIP four-year cycle.

- The GEMPO updates the TIP every four years, but the TIP may be amended at any point during the four year period to add, delete, or modify projects. See 23 CFR 450.324 for additional information.
- The draft and final versions of the TIP are posted to the MPO website on a timely basis.
- A public meeting shall be held to present the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at least 30 days prior to its adoption.
- To the maximum extent practical, the public meeting will be held at a convenient and accessible location and time. If required, more than one meeting may be held to make sure there is maximum participation.
- During the process of adopting a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a public notice shall be placed in at least one countywide newspaper and should be available in all free community newspapers.
- Copies of Final TIP documents are available to the public for a nominal printing charge.
- As a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 recipient, Gadsden / Etowah Transit projects are programmed into the GEMPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Both the planning regulations and Section 5307 guidelines require public participation in the POP development. The planning regulations require that the metropolitan transportation planning process include a proactive participation plan that provides complete information, timely public notice, and reasonable public access to key decisions and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) allows a grantee, the City of Gadsden, to rely on locally adopted public participation requirements for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in lieu of the process required in the development of the Program of Projects (POP). This is allowed if the grantee has coordinated

with the GEMPO and ensured that the public is aware that the TIP development process is being used to satisfy the POP public participation requirements.

To comply with this requirement, the Gadsden / Etowah MPO's public participation process (PPP) satisfies the grantee's public participation process for the Program of Projects (POP). When the Gadsden / Etowah MPO publishes public notices for the TIP, the notices will have an explicit statement that public notice of public involvement activities and times established for public review of and comments on the TIP will satisfy the POP requirements as follows: ***“This public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP development process will satisfy the FTA's Program of Projects requirements.”***

5.4 Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The PPP, in compliance with the requirements of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) legislation, emphasizes the importance of early, on-going public involvement in the transportation planning process. The Gadsden / Etowah MPO adopted its first Public Participation Plan in 2007. The Participation Plan was subsequently updated in 2008. Further updating was suspended in 2010 (ALDOT and FHWA concurring) in the absence of new transportation legislation. The 2013 PPP is the new Plan following passage of MAP-21 and will be adopted for use through 2018, at which time a new plan will be developed.

The purpose of the Public Participation Plan is to outline procedures for the involvement and engagement of the public in the transportation planning process for the Gadsden Etowah MPO area. This relates to the primary planning documents that have been described in this section. A new PPP is scheduled every four years unless ALDOT or a change in Federal regulations requires earlier action. ALDOT would advise the MPOs if such a development occurs and provide guidance. A new PPP shall consider, at a minimum, the following opportunities for public participation:

- **Identification of Interested Parties**
 - Establish stakeholder listings, including citizen advisory committees, community leaders, chambers of commerce, public and quasi-public organizations, housing authorities, users of alternate forms of transportation, freight interests, civic organizations, faith-based organizations, and state, federal, and local government agencies.

- Special outreach to low-income and minority populations within GEMPO that will include a list of business, and community leaders in areas with incomes below the GEMPO average and minority populations above the GEMPO average.
- Contact information that includes telephone, address, or email listings.
- **Outreach**
 - Dissemination of newsletters and summaries.
 - Development of public information on the website.
 - Use of social media to provide timely updates.
 - At least three (3) open public meetings for public review and comment.
 - Member jurisdictions involved shall also notify citizens of public meetings and opportunity for public comment during regularly scheduled board and council meetings as well as distributing notification to community contacts via email.
 - Dissemination of media notifications to public news agencies in the GEMPO area.
- **A timely opportunity for public comment on the Draft PPP will be made available during at least one TCC, CAC, and BPGAC meeting.**
- **The Draft PPP shall be open to public review and comment for no less than 45 days prior to approval by the TCC.**

The draft plan shall be advertised using the following:

 - A notice published in at least one (1) newspaper with regional coverage prior to initiation of the public comment period(s).
 - A notice published in at least one (1) newspaper with circulations targeted at minority and/or low-income populations
 - The Updated PPP will be posted on the GEMPO website.
 - A media notification to local newspapers and other local media.
 - Additional regional newspapers and non-government organizations representing interested parties will be notified as deemed appropriate.
 - When significant formal comments are received, a summary, an analysis, and report will be submitted on the disposition of comments.

5.5 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

One stated goal of the LRTP is to “address all modes providing a framework for modal connectivity that enhances mobility options for the community.” In

order to meet this goal, pedestrian and bicycle facilities need to be identified within the LRTP. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are used for transportation as well as recreation and serve as an integral element of a multimodal transportation network. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are vital for providing links to transit, accommodating short trips between neighborhoods and community facilities, and providing circulation between land uses in denser activity centers. The connection of neighborhoods to activity centers such as employment centers, community facilities, and retail opportunities by way of pedestrian and bicycle facilities will improve resident accessibility to these locations.

At a minimum, FHWA requires that “bicyclists and pedestrians shall be given due consideration in the comprehensive transportation plan,” according to 23 USC 217. FHWA’s guidance on this, states that “due consideration” of bicycle and pedestrian needs should include, at a minimum, a presumption that bicyclists and pedestrians will be accommodated in the design of new and improved transportation facilities. These requirements will be accommodated through the development of an area-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The development of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan meets all current Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and ALDOT requirements for public participation. The bicycle and pedestrian plan shall be open to public review and comment for a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to GEMPO approval. Development of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan shall consider, at a minimum, the following opportunities for public participation:

- **Identification of Interested Parties**
 - Establish stakeholder listings, including citizen advisory committees, community leaders, chambers of commerce, public and quasi-public organizations, housing authorities, users of alternate forms of transportation, freight interests, civic organizations, faith-based organizations, and state, federal, and local government agencies.
 - Special outreach to low-income and minority populations within GEMPO that will include a list of business and community leaders in areas with incomes below the GEMPO average and minority populations above the GEMPO average.
 - Contact information that includes telephone, address or email listings.
- **Outreach**
 - Dissemination of newsletters and summaries.

- Development of public information on the website.
- Use of social media to provide timely updates.
- At least three (3) open public meetings for public review and comment.
- Member jurisdictions involved shall also notify citizens of public meetings and opportunity for public comment during regularly scheduled board and council meetings as well as distributing notification to community contacts via email.
- Dissemination of media notifications to public news agencies in the GEMPO area.
- **A timely opportunity for public comment on the Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will be made available during at least one TCC, CAC, and BPGAC meeting.**
- **The draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan shall be open to public review and comment for no less than 30 days prior to approval by the TCC.**

The draft plan shall be advertised using the following:

- A notice published in at least one (1) newspaper with regional coverage prior to initiation of the public comment period(s).
- A notice published at least one (1) newspaper with circulations targeted at minority and/or low-income populations.
- The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will be posted on the GEMPO website (www.gadsdenmpo.com).
- A media notification to local newspapers and other local media.
- Additional regional newspapers and non-government organizations representing interested parties will be notified as deemed appropriate
- When significant formal comments are received, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments.

5.6 Air Quality Conformity Report (AQCR)

5.6.1 Purpose

The purpose of the AQCR is to comply with the rules and regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) of July 6, 2012, concerning National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in the Metropolitan Planning Area. The following actions will be taken to ensure all sectors of the public are involved in the development of the AQCR and the revision process for the draft and final documents.

5.6.2 AQCR Public Involvement Process

If, after Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rulemaking, the Gadsden urban area is found to be in non-conformity for ground level ozone (O₃), or any other pollutant, the Gadsden Area MPO will provide public review and comment opportunities necessary in documenting a process for attaining Air Quality Conformity. The EPA is scheduled to propose new ground-level ozone attainment levels in July 2013. The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone are currently .75/.075 (parts per billion/million) depending on reporting method. A new lower threshold range may require the Gadsden MPO to go through the Air Quality Conformity Process and develop an Air Quality Conformity Report document, in which the GEMPO will generate allowable pollutant estimates from pollutant budgets provided by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) in the Statewide Implementation Plan (SIP). The estimates will be developed by the GEMPO using Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator (MOVES) pollution modeling software (MOVES2010b).

5.6.3 Amendments to Planning Documents for Air Quality Conformity

If it becomes necessary to amend the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or to develop an AQ Conformity Report, the following activities will be undertaken to provide opportunities for public review and comment:

- At least one public meeting to solicit public review and comments on the Conformity Report or Draft TIP or LRTP amendments will be announced and held with MPO staff in attendance.
- A block ad announcement of the public meeting, its date, location and time along with information on other opportunities for public review and comment on the or the amended TIP or LRTP amendments will be published in the local newspaper of general circulation at the beginning of the 30 day review period.
- Meeting announcements and details will be posted on the GEMPO web page at www.gadsdenmpo.com.
- Copies of the Conformity Report or the amended TIP or LRTP amendments will be available on-line, in the GEMPO lobby, or mailed on request for public review and comment for thirty (30) days after adoption of the draft document by the GEMPO.
- During this 30 day period, the TCC and CAC will meet and be solicited for comments after a review of the amended TIP or LRTP amendments.

- Special outreach within the Study Area will include hand delivered announcements of public review and comment opportunities to local barbershops, beauty parlors and churches in low income and minority communities.
- Comment forms will accompany all copies of the ACR or the amended TIP or LRTP amendments and can be submitted at any time during the 25 day review period by mail, dropped off in the GEMPO lobby or via email to the GEMPO.
- All public comments on the Conformity Report or the amended TIP or LRTP amendments will be summarized in a report and provided to the MPO at its regular meeting for review, consideration and response if necessary. Copies of all comments will be included in the appendices of the Final TIP.
- Copies of documents may be obtained by contacting: Mr. Meinrad Tabengwa at the Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO), located at 1699 Chestnut Street, Gadsden, AL 35901, or by calling (256) 549-4519, or Fax (256) 549-4864, or by emailing: mtabengwa@cityofgadsden.com.

5.6.4 Amendments to Operational Documents

Amendments to formal planning documents containing project listings and funding will be carried out pursuant to sections of Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450, applicable to road and highway projects under various Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding programs and those transportation projects and funding actions under Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs.

While governing regulations are specific to the Long Range Transportation Plan (Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Regional Transportation Plan), the short range component of the Long Range, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the process is extended in Alabama to those plans with projects and funding presented in tabular or listed format, to include the Congestion Management Plan (CMP), the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and the amended project listings of the Long Range and TIP documents under the Air Quality Conformity Process.

An amendment to the Long Range Plan, TIP, and STIP documents may take one of two forms:

5.6.4.1 Administrative Modification

An Administrative Modification is a minor change to project costs, funding sources, or project/phase start dates. Such minor changes or adjustments do not require public involvement activities, reestablishment of financial constraint, or, in areas of air quality non-conformity, confirmation of conformity determination. Amendments of this nature are generally conducted through coordination of ALDOT Bureau of Transportation Planning and Modal Programs staff and MPO staff to minimize plan modification and documentation activities and costs.

5.6.4.2 Formal Amendment

The Formal Amendment Process is a major change to project costs, design scope, funding amounts, project/phase start dates, or a revision approved and required in the MPO plans by the State as an adjunct to the its Public Involvement process. This process requires public notice, addition to MPO monthly meeting agendas, review by the public and MPO advisory committees, reviews by federal agencies, a vote by the MPO Policy Board, and an executed Resolution of adoption. The process criterion then, under which a formal amendment occurs, is when a plan or document:

- Adds a project
- Deletes a project
- Project costs exceed 20%, or \$1 million, of the original projected costs, whichever is smaller
- Changes a project or phase start or completion date
- Changes the project design scope or termini description

Note: Amendments to Congestion Management Plans (TMAs only) and Bicycle Pedestrian Plans (now a formal plan in Alabama) are subject to the same processes as above. However, ALDOT will generally work with MPOs to make adjustments to these documents on a more informal basis in order to accommodate public involvement meetings and advisory committee scheduling.

5.7 Previous Year Authorized Project Listing

The Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization is required by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) to publish or otherwise make available by the cooperative effort of the State, Transit Operator, and the Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization for public review, an Annual Listing of Projects, including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. The listing shall be consistent with the funding categories identified in each metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Although an entire project may be in a TIP, the obligation for a particular year may be for only a portion of that project (e.g., acquisition of right of way, or construction of only a portion of the project). In these cases, only the amount of the obligation for that particular year should appear on the Annual Listing. To aid public understanding, the Annual Listing for multi-year projects should also include the full project amount requested and the amount of funds remaining for use in subsequent years. This provision is intended to increase the transparency of government spending on transportation projects and strategies in metropolitan areas to State / local officials, and to the public at large.

6.0 Meetings and Notifications

6.1 Public Notifications

Notifications for all public meetings, public comment periods, and public review periods shall be placed at least 10 days in advance in the following publications / locations:

- Gadsden Times newspaper
- Local community newspapers
- Official bulletin boards of the Etowah County Courthouse
- Official bulletin boards in the cities of Attalla, Gadsden, Glencoe, Hokes Bluff, Rainbow City, Reece City and Southside
- Official bulletin board at the City of Gadsden Public Library

Notification of all public meetings, public comment periods, and public review periods shall be placed on the GEMPO website: www.gadsdenmpo.com. Certification of posting on official bulletin boards and a copy of the newspaper publication shall be obtained and retained in the GEMPO files for a period of three (3) years.

6.2 Mailing List

The GEMPO shall maintain a distribution list of interested groups and individuals, including state, county, and local government officials, Chambers of Commerce, community groups, special interest groups, transportation providers, freight companies, etc. These individual stakeholders and groups shall also receive notices or flyers via regular mail or email notification at least five (5) days prior to any public meeting, public review period, or public comment period.

- Elected officials & legislators
- Transportation agencies (transit)
- Local governments (cities and county)
- Gadsden Economic Development Corporation
- Gadsden Etowah Chamber of Commerce
- Major employers
- Local media (print, television and radio)
- Private freight shippers
- Providers of private freight transportation
- Private transportation providers (taxi)
- Bicycle interest groups
- Pedestrian interest groups
- Transit interest groups
- Disabled persons interest groups
- Historical preservation groups
- Public library (for posting notices)
- Users of public transportation
- Local school districts
- Local Housing Authorities
- Local colleges & universities
- Business and civic groups
- Social service organizations
- Native American Tribal Councils
- Special interest groups
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Other interested citizens

6.3 Public Meetings

All meetings of the GEMPO Policy Board and other public meetings shall be held in compliance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act of 2005. The public shall be afforded an opportunity to participate at every public meeting. All public meeting venues will be accessible to individuals with specialized mobility needs and those who utilize public transportation. Public meetings shall be recorded on audio and/or videotape. Recorded media shall be retained by the MPO for a period of three years. Public meetings held for the purpose of presentation of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or the Long Range Transportation Plan

(LRTP) shall be televised on local public access cable television, if possible. Those attending public meetings will be asked to sign a roster. The roster shall be retained by the GEMPO for a period of three years. The GEMPO shall prepare a summary of the meeting, record and document comments, speakers, and other information, and shall submit the information to ALDOT after the completion of a public comment period.

6.4 Public Review

In order to afford the public an opportunity to review planning documents and/or proposals in detail, a public review period shall be announced lasting a minimum of thirty (30) days before the adoption of Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Public Participation Plan (PPP). During the public review period, the GEMPO shall make available at the venues listed at 6.1 above copies of the document(s) proposed for adoption. The public may review the documents at these venues during normal working hours. If possible, staff will be available to discuss the document or answer questions. The public review period may run concurrently with the public comment period.

6.5 Public Comment

To solicit public opinion, a public comment (written and oral) period shall be held for the period required by federal and state regulations or the number of days listed below, prior to the adoption of the following documents:

- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) 30 days
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 30 days
- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 30 days
[every four to five years]
- New Public Participation Plan **45 days**
[every four years or with new legislation; amendments 30 days]
- Update to Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 30 days
- Air Quality Conformance Report (AQCR) 30 days

Notices of the comment period will be advertised in the Gadsden Times Newspaper and other local area newspapers. The public notice will also be mailed to the GEMPO's mailing list of interested parties. Any significant oral or written comments received during the public comment period shall be summarized along with a report on the disposition of comments in the final planning document. A copy of the summary and disposition report shall be sent to the ALDOT and FHWA. The summary and disposition report shall be retained in the GEMPO files for a three-year period.

It is the goal of the Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization to

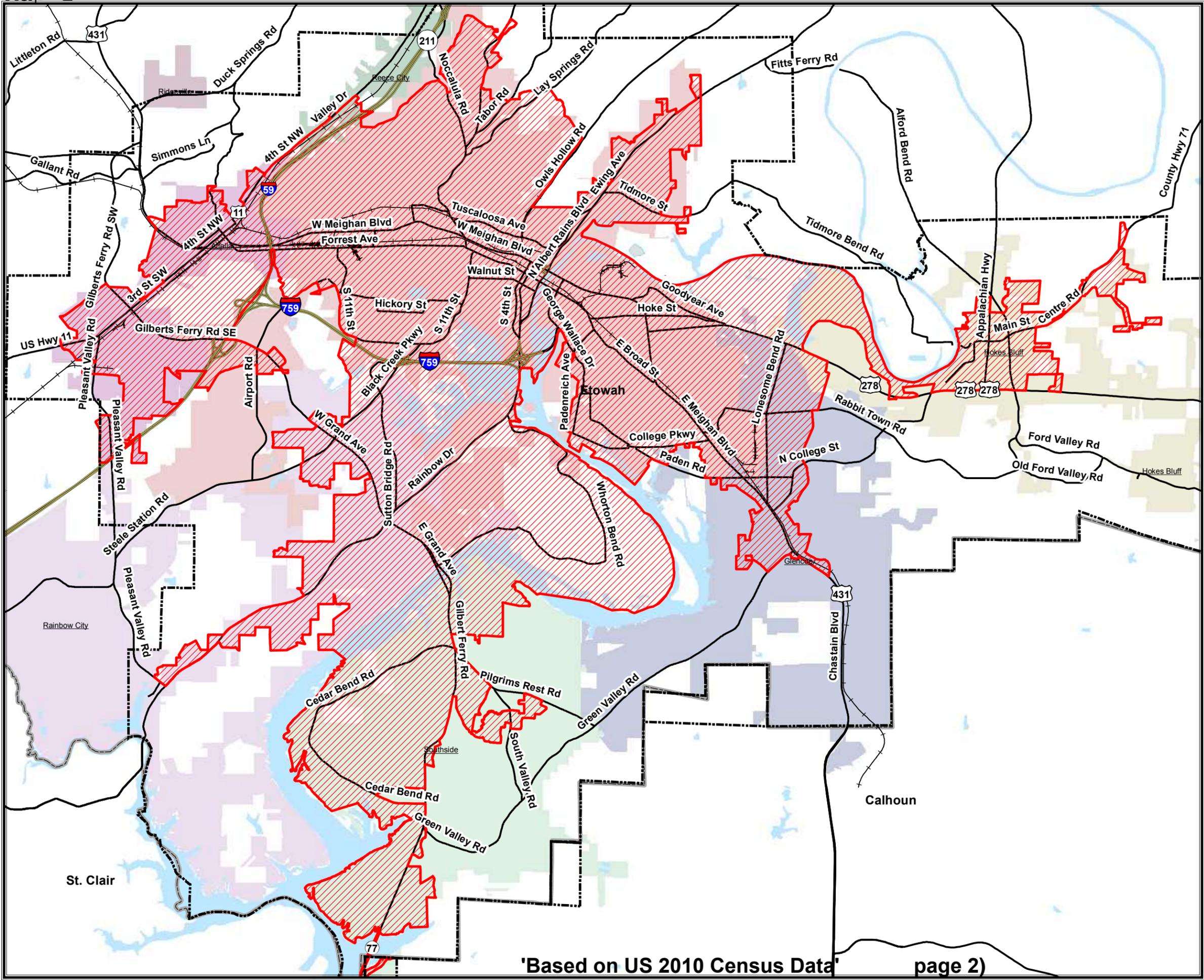
make public information available in electronically accessible format to afford reasonable opportunities for consideration of public comment and opinion. The official website of the Gadsden / Etowah MPO (www.gadsdenmpo.com) will be utilized to post notices for public meetings and various planning documents and projects. The GEMPO's website (www.gadsdenmpo.com) will have the following GEMPO documents available for public access: the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Public Participation Plan (PPP), the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the Previous Year Authorized Project Listing. The GEMPO will provide a user-friendly website containing other pertinent transportation information such as newsletters, agendas, meeting minutes, and links to outside agencies. The website will provide an opportunity for citizen feedback.

7.0 Appendices

A. Map of Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Area

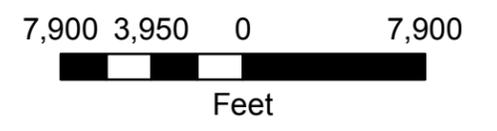
Gadsden-Etowah MPO

2010 Urbanized Census Boundary



Legend

-  2010 Urbanized Census Boundary
-  Gadsden-Etowah Urban Area
-  Primary Roads
-  Secondary Roads
-  Altoona
-  Attalla
-  Boaz
-  Gadsden
-  Glencoe
-  Hokes Bluff
-  Rainbow City
-  Reece City
-  Ridgeville
-  Sardis City
-  Southside
-  Walnut Grove



B. Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AQ	Air Quality [Air Quality Conformity; Air Quality Report; other]
BPGAC	Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Advisory Committee
CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
CFR	Codes of Federal Regulations
DBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
ECAT	Etowah County Area Transportation
EJ	Environmental Justice
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
GEMPO	Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GTS	Gadsden Transportation Services
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991)
LAP	Language Assistance Plan
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
L RTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
PPP	Public Participation Plan
PL	Planning Funds
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program
TCC	Technical Coordinating Committee
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
USC	U.S.C; U. S. Code; United State Code [law]

C. GEMPO Organization

Gadsden / Etowah MPO (GEMPO) Policy Board Voting Members

Terry John Calhoun	Chairman, Mayor, City of Rainbow City
Larry Means	Vice Chairman, Mayor, City of Attalla
Johnny Harris	Division Engineer, 1 st Division, ALDOT
Joey Statum	Commissioner, Etowah County
Sherman Guyton	Mayor, City of Gadsden
Chad Hare	Engineer, City of Gadsden
Nick Hall	City Planner, City of Gadsden
Meinrad Tabengwa	Transportation Planner, City of Gadsden
Charles Gilchrist	Mayor, City of Glencoe
Gary Reeves	Mayor, City of Hokes Bluff
Wally Burns	Mayor, City of Southside
Randall Scott	Mayor, City of Reece City

Non-Voting Members

Robert J. Jilla, PE	Bureau Chief, Transportation Planning and Modal Programs
Andres Ramirez	FTA State Programs Team Liaison – Region 4 Atlanta
Clint Andrews	Planning and Realty Manager, FHWA – Alabama

Advisory Committees

Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Advisory Committee (BPGAC) Voting Members

Roger Silvey	Chairman, City of Hokes Bluff
Heidi Darbo	Vice Chairman, city of Gadsden
Charles Shaw	City of Attalla
Paul Gore	City of Attalla
Steve Garrison	Etowah County
Ed Whatley	City of Gadsden
Don Richey	City of Glencoe
Mike Barber	City of Glencoe
Joe Battles	City of Southside
Liz Bright	City of Rainbow City
Vacant	Etowah County
Vacant	City of Hokes Bluff
Vacant	City of Rainbow City
Vacant	City of Reece City
Vacant	City of Reece City
Vacant	City of Southside

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Voting Members

Barry Hill	Chairman, City of Glencoe
Preston Nix	Vice Chairman, City of Attalla
Richard Bradfield	City of Attalla
Carolyn Parker	Etowah County
Floyd L. Donald	Etowah County
Tom Barnes	City of Gadsden
Jeff Cheatwood	City of Hokes Bluff
Myra Whitt	City of Hokes Bluff
Ina Black	City of Rainbow City
Anita Bedwell	City of Rainbow City
Vacant	City of Gadsden
Vacant	City of Glencoe
Vacant	City of Reece City
Vacant	City of Reece City
Vacant	City of Southside
Vacant	City of Southside

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Voting Members

Meinrad Tabengwa	Chairman, Transportation Planner, City of Gadsden
Nick Hall	Director of Planning, City of Gadsden
Terry John Calhoun	Chairman, Gadsden / Etowah MPO
Chad Hare	Engineer, City of Gadsden
Tim Graves	Engineer, Etowah County
Les Hopson	Pre-construction Engineer, ALDOT
Ben Thackerson	District Engineer, ALDOT
Vacant	FHWA

*Five (5) voting members required for a quorum.

Non-Voting Members

Rebecca Crane	Jones, Blair, Waldrup, & Tucker, Inc.
Houston Jenkins, Jr.	Jones, Blair, Waldrup, & Tucker, Inc.
Jeff Gray	GIS Analyst, City of Gadsden
Heath Williamson	City Engineer, city of Rainbow City
Jason Nicholson	City Engineer, City of Attalla
Dr. Emmanuel Oranika	Metropolitan Transportation Planning Administrator, ALDOT
Doug Peterson	Volkert & Associates
Joe Meads	Sain Associates
Mike McCain	Gadsden / Etowah Industrial Development Authority

D. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan [City of Gadsden]

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) PLAN

Language Access

Title VI and its implementing regulations require that FTA recipients take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP). According to FTA Circular 4702.1B:

“Certain FTA recipients or sub recipients, such as those serving very few LEP persons or those with very limited resources may choose not to develop a written LEP plan. However, the absence of a written LEP plan does not obviate the underlying obligation to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to a recipient’s program or activities. Recipients or sub recipients electing not to prepare a written language implementation plan should consider other ways to reasonably provide meaningful access.”

Due to its limited resources and the very small size of the LEP population the GEMPO has chosen not to develop a written LEP plan. However, as documented below, the MPO currently implements a number of measures to ensure that limited-English residents are afforded access and input into its services and programs. Therefore, GEMPO believes that it meets the standard for providing opportunities for meaningful input and access for limited-English speaking residents.

Four Factor Analysis

The U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued its *Policy Guidance Concerning Recipient’s Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons* [Federal Register: December 14, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 239)]. This policy states that DOT recipients are required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs by LEP persons. This coverage extends to the recipient’s entire program.

There are four factors for agencies to consider when assessing language needs and determining what steps they should take to ensure access for LEP persons, regardless of whether or not the agency chooses not to prepare a written LEP plan:

- 1) The number of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity or service of the recipient;
- 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 recipient to people’s lives; and
- 4) The resources available to the recipient and costs. A brief description of the self- assessment undertaken in each of these areas follows.

The number of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity or service.

Based on the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau (2007-2011) out of a total population of 97,968 residents aged five years and over, Etowah County is home to 2,858 residents who speak a language other than English. This represents 2.9% of the population. Of this non-English speaking population a total of 1,553 speak English “less than very well”. This represents only 1.6% of this population group. People of Spanish descent are the primary LEP group likely to be involved with GEMPO programs and transit services. They comprise 1.9% of the population. The summarized data is shown at Table 1.

After analyzing the four factors outlined in U. S. DOT policy guidance, GEMPO has determined that a limited-English proficiency plan is not required, as the agency already employs a number of measures to ensure that limited-English proficient individuals have meaningful input and access to GEMPO services. A number of public outreach techniques will be used to enable involvement of the LEP population in the planning process as follows:

Interaction with the Limited-English Proficiency Persons

Public Meetings & Workshops

- Offer customized presentations to existing groups and organizations
- Co-host workshops with community and small business groups
- Encourage opportunities for public input directly to policy board members

Techniques for Public Meetings/Workshops

- Open Houses
- Question and Answer session with planners and policy board members
- Vary the time of day for workshops (day/evening)

Techniques for Involving Low Income and Minority Groups

- Outreach in the community (community centers, churches, health centers)
- Information booths at community events Include information on meeting notices and how to request translation assistance
- Robust use of "visualization" techniques, including maps and graphics to illustrate trends and choices being debated

Techniques for Involving Limited-English Proficient Populations

- Translate documents and web content on key initiatives
- Engage On-call translators for meetings
- Translate news releases and outreach to alternative language media, such as radio, television, newspapers
- Robust use of visualization techniques, including maps and graphics to illustrate choices being considered.
- Information booths at community events
- Provide Comment cards/"take one" cards at frequently used locations

Table 1 - Census Data

Etowah County LEP Data		
Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English For the Population 5 Years and Over	Total	% of Pop
<i>Total resident population 5 years and older</i>	97,968	100
<i>Speak English only</i>	95,110	97.1
<i>Language other than English</i>	2,858	2.9
<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	1,553	1.6
<i>Spanish</i>	1,883	1.9
<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	1,102	1.1
<i>Other Indo-European languages</i>	457	0.5
<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	120	0.1
<i>Asian and Pacific Islander languages</i>	409	0.4
<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	240	0.2
<i>Other languages</i>	109	0.1
<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	91	0.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

For additional information, please contact:

Meinrad Tabengwa
Transportation Planner
Gadsden Etowah Metropolitan Planning
Organization
(256) 549-4519 office
(256) 549-4864 fax
mtabengwa@cityofgadsden.com

Mailing address:
Gadsden Etowah Metropolitan Planning
Organization
1699 Chestnut Street
Gadsden, AL 35901
Email:
mtabengwa@cityofgadsden.com
Website:
[www. Gadsdenmpo.com](http://www.Gadsdenmpo.com)

The Messenger Newspaper

Post Office Box 858
Gadsden, Alabama 35902
(256) 547-1049 Fax (256) 547-1011

STATE OF ALABAMA
ETOWAH COUNTY

Before me, a Notary Public, and in for said County, in said State, personally appeared the undersigned, Chris McCarthy, who is known to me, who after being by me sworn, deposes and says under oath as follows:

That he is the Publisher of The **Messenger Newspaper** published in said County, in said State, and authorized under the laws of the State of Alabama to carry legal advertising.

That as such Publisher, he has knowledge of fact hereinafter stated, and that he is authorized by said, **The Messenger Newspaper** to make this affidavit:

That there is glued to said affidavit advertising of Public Notice which is printed in **The Messenger Newspaper** in its regularly circulated editions on 7/8, 2011 and that the clipping glued to this affidavit constitutes an exact and true copy of said advertisement as it appeared in **The Messenger Newspaper** on the dates shown above.

Actual cost of Advertising: \$ 129.75.

Subscribed and sworn to me on this the 11 day of July, 2011.

Chris McCarthy
Publisher of
The Messenger Newspaper

Subscribed and sworn to me on this the 11 day of July, 2011.

Kenneth Howard
Notary Public

Public Notice

Draft FY2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Gadsden / Etowah Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO) announces the availability of the Draft FY2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for public review and comment.

A public meeting to discuss and review the Updated TIP will be held on Monday July 18, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. in the ALCO Room, Senior Activity Building, 623 Broad Street, Gadsden, AL 35901.

Copies of the TIP can be reviewed at the following location: Gadsden Transportation Services, 1699 Chestnut Street, Gadsden, Alabama. The office will be open Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you have a

ny questions please call the Transportation Services office at (256) 549-4519.

Persons with disabilities who may need special accommodations to review the Gadsden / Etowah Area Draft TIP or to attend the public meeting should contact the City of Gadsden Transportation Services office listed above at least two (2) days prior to the meeting.

The Draft TIP consists of a listing of projects where some phase of work is expected to be initiated from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2015. Phases of project work include: preliminary engineering (PE), right-of-way (RW), utility relocation (UT) and construction (CN).

The TIP is financially constrained in that the proposed expenditures do not exceed the anticipated Federal aid revenues.

The MPO office will be accepting comments on the document from July 1, 2011 through July 31, 2011.

All comments should be sent to: FY2012 TIP, Gadsden Transportation Services, 1699 Chestnut Street, Gadsden, AL 35901.

Fax: 256-549-4519 Email: mtabengwa@cityofgadsden.com

All comments should be received by 5:00 p.m. on July 31, 2011.

The Reporter Newspaper
P.O. Box 1962, Gadsden, AL 35902
(256) 547-3357 - Office / Fax

STATE OF ALABAMA

ETOWAH COUNTY

Before me, Horace T. Jackson, II, a Notary Public, and in for said County, in said state, personally appeared Theresa Beverly, who is known to me, and who, after being by me duly sworn, deposes and says under oath as follows:

That she is an employee of The Reporter Newspaper, a monthly newspaper published in said County, in said State, and authorized under the laws of the State of Alabama to carry advertising. That as such employee, she has knowledge of facts hereinafter stated, and that she is authorized by said newspaper, to make this affidavit:

That there is attached to said affidavit advertising of the _____ which was printed in The Reporter Newspaper in its regularly circulated edition for month of July, 2011 and that the clipping attached to this affidavit constitutes an exact and true copy of said advertisement as it appeared in The Reporter Newspaper on dates shown above.

Cost of advertising \$ _____

Subscribed and sworn to by me on this the 11 day of July, 2011.

Theresa Beverly

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this the 11 day of July, 2011

[Signature]
NOTARY PUBLIC

My commission expires 1/26/2013

1. Draft FY 2012 UPWOP
2. Draft FY 2010-2015 TIP

Draft FY2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Gadsden / Etowah Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO) announces the availability of the Draft FY2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for public review and comment.

A public meeting to discuss and review the Updated TIP will be held on Monday July 18, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. in the ALCO Room, Senior Activity Building, 623 Broad Street, Gadsden, AL 35901.

Copies of the TIP can be reviewed at the following location: Gadsden Transportation Services, 1699 Chestnut Street, Gadsden, Alabama. The office will be open Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you have any questions please call the Transportation Services office at (256) 549-4519.

Persons with disabilities who may need special accommodations to review the Gadsden / Etowah Area Draft TIP or to attend the public meeting should contact the City of Gadsden Transportation Services office listed above at least two (2) days prior to the meeting.

The Draft TIP consists of a listing of projects where some phase of work is expected to be initiated from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2015. Phases of project work include: preliminary engineering (PE), right-of-way (RW), utility relocation (UT) and construction (CN).

The TIP is financially constrained in that the proposed expenditures do not exceed the anticipated Federal aid revenues.

The MPO office will be accepting comments on the document from July 1, 2011 through July 31, 2011.

All comments should be sent to: FY2012 TIP, Gadsden Transportation Services, 1699 Chestnut Street, Gadsden, AL 35901.

Fax: 256-549-4519

Email: mtabengwa@cityofgadsden.com

All comments should be received by 5:00 p.m. on July 31, 2011.

GADSDEN / ETOWAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

DRAFT TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) 2012-2015

Public Review & Public Meeting Comment Form

The MPO requires the following information in order to respond to your comment:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Did you attend: Public Review YES/NO Public Meeting YES/NO

NAME OF PROJECT & LOCATION

COMMENT _____

Must be submitted by **5:00 p.m., July 31, 2011** to: Draft FY2012/15 TIP,
Gadsden Transportation Services, 1699 Chestnut Street, Gadsden, AL 35901
Fax: 256-549-4864
Email: mtabengwa@cityofgadsden.com

Appendix G

Livability Principles and Indicators

1) Provision of diverse transportation choices

Develop and implement safer, dependable, efficient, and economical transportation choices.

Decrease household transportation costs; reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve the air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health.

Indicators

- Percentage of Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) all roadway improvement projects, including capacity, that incorporate bicycle and pedestrian components: 75.0% [Track increase]
- Percentage of Single Occupancy Vehicle commuting: 87.0% [Track decrease]
- Percentage of Federal funding for Safety Projects versus total projects funding: 10.2% [Track increase]

2) Promotion of equitable and affordable housing

Expand location and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, income levels, races and ethnicities to enhance mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

Indicators

- Percentage of household income spent on housing: 47.0% [Track change]
- Percentage of house hold income spent on energy: 10.0% [Track change]
- Percentage of available multi-unit housing Etowah County 2007-2011: 11.6% [Track increase]

3) Enhance economic competitiveness

Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers as well as expanded business access to markets.

Indicators

- Working Population Etowah County in private non-farm employment (2011): 28,470 [Track increase]
- Percent of change from previous year (2010) Etowah County, non-farm employment: (- 3.4%) [Track change]
- Median household income 2007-2011: \$37,772 [Track change]
- Number of firms operating in Etowah County in 2007: 9,147 [Track change]

4) Support existing communities

Target federal funding toward existing communities through such strategies as transit-oriented, mixed-use development to enhance community revitalization,

improve the efficiency of public works investments.

Indicators

- Percentage of LRTP funding used to improve existing facilities: 60.0% [Track increase]
- Percentage of *Federal* transit funding dollars versus total project funding in the MPO approved four year TIP cycle: Transit 37.07% versus All Other 62.93%. [Track increase]
- Mean travel time to work (minutes) 2007-2011: 23.9 [Track decrease]

5) Coordinate policies and leverage investment

Align federal policies and funding with local strategies in order to remove barriers to collaboration.

Encourage leveraged funding and enhance the collaborative efforts of all levels of government to plan for future growth.

Indicators

- Percentage of all-source transit investment dollars versus other project dollars: 55.4% transit investment; all other projects 44.6% [Track increase]
- Dollar amount of local/state match funding for all projects in the FY2012-2015 TIP cycle: \$13,379,969 [Track increase]

6) Value communities and neighborhoods

Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods – rural, urban or suburban.

Indicators

- Federal funding for Safe Routes to School in the current FY2012-2015 TIP: \$162,806 [Track increase]
- Number of public recreational facilities within the City of Gadsden [parks, gymnasiums, picnic areas, concert/meeting venues, sports complexes, theatres]: 19 [Track increase]
- Percentage of Federal system preservation dollars (resurfacing) in the FY2012-2015 TIP: 34.2% [Track change]