



Gadsden Etowah  
Metropolitan Planning  
Organization (MPO)



## 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Public Open House  
November 13, 2014

# Welcome!



Thank you for coming to tonight's Public Open House. This brief presentation provides an overview of the existing conditions and needs assessment for the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Afterwards, please visit the stations to review maps and interim findings in more detail.

# Gadsden Etowah MPO (GEMPO)



- Organization responsible for transportation planning in the Gadsden and Etowah urbanized area
- Study area jurisdictions include:
  - Cities of Attalla, Gadsden, Glencoe, Hokes Bluff, Rainbow City, Reece City, and Southside
  - Sections of unincorporated Etowah County
  - Small section in the northwestern portion of unincorporated Calhoun County

# Purpose of the LRTP



- Identify existing and future needs through 2040
- Prioritize multimodal projects and strategies to meet the needs
- Tie transportation infrastructure to land use
- Pace transportation improvements to growth
- Relate improvements to “real world” funding availability
- Required for projects to be funded through federal and state plans/programs

# L RTP Goals



- Provide accessibility and mobility for people and goods
- Enhance system performance, operations and safety
- Protect the environment and quality of life, and promote coordination of land use and transportation
- Preserve and maintain the existing system
- Address all modes, providing a framework for modal connectivity that maximizes mobility options
- Support economic development and community goals

# Community Outreach & Input



- General Public
  - Two public open house meetings
    - November 13, 2014—Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment
    - Early January 2015—Draft Recommendations and Plan
  - Information posted on MPO website [www.gadsdenmpo.net](http://www.gadsdenmpo.net)
- MPO Committees
  - Policy Committee (GEMPO)
  - Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)
  - Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC)
  - Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Advisory Committee (BPGAC)

# Methods & Information Sources



- Previous plans and studies
- Field surveys
- Travel demand modeling
- Data collection questionnaire
- Committee meeting input
- Public comment forms

# Population & Demographics



- Population increased by 1 percent to 104,430 from 2000 to 2010
  - 19 percent non-white
  - 19 percent below poverty level
  - 17 percent aged 65 and over
- Greatest population growth occurred in Southside, Rainbow City and northwest Calhoun County
- Highest population density along Meighan Blvd/Forrest Ave corridor in central Gadsden
- Highest minority concentrations along Meighan Blvd and Piedmont Cutoff corridors
- Highest poverty concentrations north of Meighan Blvd between US 411 and SR 211, near downtown Gadsden, and East Gadsden near US 431/US 278 intersection

# Employment & Travel Patterns



- Employment increased by 6.5 percent to 40,300 jobs from 2000 to 2010
- Greatest employment growth occurred in Gadsden along the US 278 and US 411 corridors
- Majority (85 percent) of Etowah County workers drive alone to work
- Mean travel time to work for Etowah County is 24 minutes

# Roadways



## ■ Functional Classification Distribution

- Interstates (I-59 and I-759) ~ 23 miles
- Principal Arterials (US 431, US 411, SR 77) ~ 81 miles
- Minor Arterials (Steele Station Rd, SR 211) ~ 59 miles
- Collectors (Green Valley Rd, Tabor Rd) ~ 191 miles

## ■ Number of Lanes

- Meighan Blvd only six-lane roadway in MPO area
- Most arterials are four-lane roadways

# Roadways



- Most of roadway network functions well, but need exists for operational (signalization) improvements
- Traffic volumes
  - Meighan Blvd between I-59 and Piedmont Cutoff has highest volumes ~ 30,000 trips per day
  - US 411 between SR 77 and Meighan Blvd ~28,000 trips per day
  - I-759 ~22,000 trips per day
  - SR 77 from I-59 to Southside ~20,000 trips per day
- Congested roadway segments include
  - SR 77 between I-59 and Airport Rd
  - SR 77 between US 411 and Southside
  - US 411 between SR 77 and Meighan Blvd

# Bridges



- All public bridges inspected by ALDOT at least every 2 years
  - Involves functionality or design issues other than ability to carry weight
  - Any deficiency that affects load-carrying capacity must be immediately strengthened, signed with appropriate load limits, or closed
  - Sufficiency rating ranges from 100 to 0 (best to worst)
  - Bridges scoring below 50 are eligible for replacement or rehabilitation
- 232 bridges in Etowah County
  - 99 maintained by the state, 88 by the county, and 45 by municipalities
  - Median sufficiency rating is 90; average sufficiency rating is 78
  - 34 bridges (15 percent) received a sufficiency rating less than 50
  - Median age is 45 years
  - 66 bridges (28 percent) built or reconstructed within the last 25 years
  - 102 bridges (44 percent) aged 50 years or older

# Freight & Industry



- I-59 and I-759 critical to truck movement, connecting Gadsden to Birmingham, Chattanooga, and places beyond
- Other key freight routes include SR 77, US 431, US 411 and US 278
- 11 major truck lines have local terminal facilities
- Daily truck movements in the 501-1000 range for productions and attractions in 2002
- Much of the freight traffic other than I-59 services major retail shopping and smaller industrial parks/warehouse distribution
- Industrial development clustered along SR 77 near Northeast Alabama Regional Airport and I-59/I-759 interchange

# Rail, Aviation & Ports



- 2 freight railroads
  - Norfolk Southern—Birmingham to/from Chattanooga
  - Alabama & Tennessee River—Birmingham to/from Port of Guntersville
- Rail/truck transloading services at Gadsden Industrial Park
- Passenger rail via Amtrak accessed at Anniston and Birmingham stations (1/day/direction)
- Northeast Alabama Regional Airport near I-59 at AL-77 offers general aviation (~16 landings/day)
- Coosa River boat launches for fishing/pleasure boats, but closest inland river access is via the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway at the Port of Guntersville

# Safety



- Countywide crash data reviewed for years 2012-2014
  - 22 percent of crashes were intersection related
  - 76 percent of crashes resulted in property damage only
  - Less than 1 percent of crashes were fatal
  - 4 percent of crashes resulted in incapacitating injuries and 16 percent in non-incapacitating injuries
  - Peak period is 4:00-6:00 PM; peak day is Friday
- Section 130 program
  - Administered by ALDOT
  - Intended to eliminate hazards at railway-highway crossings
  - Several projects in Etowah County in recent years

# Bicycle and Pedestrian



- *Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan* completed in 2013
- Existing facilities largely unchanged, except addition of multi-use Black Creek Trail and adjacent biking/hiking trails
- Pedestrian network is limited
  - Majority of roadways do not have full sidewalk coverage
  - Existing sidewalks are mostly located in the downtown areas of Gadsden and Attalla and in older residential areas
- Bicyclists primarily use existing roadways
  - Level of bicycle accommodation on network is adequate, although less experienced riders are often uncomfortable in mixed traffic
  - Many opportunities to expand the on-street bicycle network, primarily by paving shoulders outside the existing pavement

# Public Transportation



- Three transit services operate within Etowah County
  - Gadsden Trolley Company—4 fixed routes within Gadsden’s urban core
  - DART—demand response service within Gadsden city limits, to/from Attalla, and to/from Rainbow City
  - Etowah County Rural Transportation—countywide demand response
- *Gadsden Transit Analysis* completed in 2010
  - Most areas with high transit propensity served by existing fixed-route system
  - The urban core, and jobs in the city center, are well served, but residents outside the core cannot use the fixed-route system to reach those jobs
  - Longer term recommendations include expanding to growing areas (Attalla, Rainbow City, Glencoe and beyond the city limits) and increasing coordination with Etowah County Transit
- Intercity bus service provided by Greyhound

# Moving Forward→→→



- Visit the stations to learn more about the existing conditions and needs assessment. Representatives from GEMPO and the consultant team are available to answer your questions.
- Complete a comment form. Your input will be critical as we move forward to develop and prioritize the project recommendations and draft the final plan.
- Review information online at:  
[www.gadsdenmpo.net](http://www.gadsdenmpo.net)