

City of Gadsden – Title VI Program

The contents of this Title VI program reflect the views of the City of Gadsden, and are not necessarily those of United States Department of Transportation or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The City of Gadsden is solely responsible for the accuracy of information presented in this Title VI report.

Civil Rights Compliance: In compliance with Title VI regulations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in the United States of America shall, on grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participating in, or denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The City of Gadsden must ensure that federally supported transit service and related benefits are distributed in an equitable manner. The City of Gadsden has certified that it is in compliance with the Title VI regulations.

2016/177

RESOLUTION NO. R-153-16

Adopting Title VI Plan Update

WHEREAS, agencies receiving financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended); and

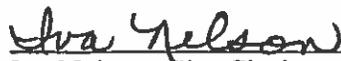
WHEREAS, the City of Gadsden is a recipient of such funds from the Federal Transit Administration; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gadsden continues to be committed to the principles that prohibit discrimination in any of its programs and activities;

Now, Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GADSDEN, ALABAMA, that;

1. The Mayor is authorized to implement the plan outlined in the Title VI policy statement consistent with applicable law; and
2. The Mayor, through the Title VI Coordinator and Title VI Manager, will provide periodic updates to the City Council as necessary and required.

I hereby certify that this resolution was duly adopted by the City Council of Gadsden, Alabama, at a meeting held on March 29, 2016.



Iva Nelson, City Clerk

**TITLE VI PROGRAM
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1.	Introduction.....	Page 1
2.	Resolution.....	Page 2
3.	Purpose.....	Page 4
4.	Requirements.....	Page 4
5.	Policy Statement.....	Page 5
6.	City of Gadsden Government.....	Page 6
7.	Notifications of Beneficiaries.....	Page 6
8.	Lawsuits and Complaints.....	Page 7
9.	Public Participation.....	Page 7
10.	Limited English Proficiency.....	Page 7
11.	Required Title VI Submissions.....	Page 9
12.	System Description / Service Standards.....	Page 10

APPENDICES

1.	Gadsden City Council.....	Page 11
2.	Title VI Complaint Process.....	Page 14
3.	Limited English Proficiency Data.....	Page 20
4.	Certifications and Assurances.....	Page 21
5.	Public Involvement Plan.....	Page 22

PURPOSE

Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states the following: "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 discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

To achieve this purpose, each Federal department and agency that provides financial assistance for any program or activity is authorized and directed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to effectuate provisions of Title VI for each program or activity by issuing generally applicable rules, regulations, or requirements. In this regard, the responsibility of the Federal Transit Administration is to ensure that federally supported transit service and related benefits are distributed by applicants, recipients, and sub-recipients of Federal Transit Administration assistance in a manner consistent with Title VI. The employment practices of a grant applicant, recipient are also covered under Title VI if the primary purpose of the FTA supported program is to provide employment or those employment practices would result in discrimination against beneficiaries of FTA assisted services and benefits.

The purpose of the City of Gadsden's transit system, Gadsden Transportation Services (GTS) Title VI program is to:

1. Ensure that the level and quality of public transportation service is provided in a nondiscriminatory manner;
2. Promote full and fair participation in public transit decision-making without regard to race, color or national origin; and
3. Ensure meaningful access to transit-related programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).

REQUIREMENTS

All programs administered by the Federal Transit Administration are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the implementing regulations issued by the Department of Justice (28 CFR Part 42, Subpart F) and the Department of Transportation (49 CFR Part 21).

The Gadsden Transportation Services (GTS) is a recipient of Federal Transit Administration assistance and shall comply with the Title VI requirements as outlined in Circular 4702.1B of October 2012. The Federal Transit Administration has established two main categories of reporting requirements; General and Program Specific. GTS is subjected to both of the main categories of reporting requirements because:

1. General reporting requirements are the same for all recipients regardless of the type or level of assistance received; and
2. GTS is a public transit provider which provides transit services primarily in the City of Gadsden, the cities of Attalla and Rainbow City (parts of the Gadsden urbanized area) and receives capital and planning assistance from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The population is less than 200,000.

Because GTS is a public transit provider which operates less than fifty (50) vehicles in peak service in an urbanized area, there is no requirement to provide demographic, monitoring or analytical information. GTS is providing some system descriptions and other information in this document for information purposes.

GADSDEN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

TITLE VI POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Gadsden assures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259) be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. The City of Gadsden further assures every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not.

In the event that the City of Gadsden distributes federal assistance funds to another governmental entity or contractor, the City of Gadsden will include Title VI language in all written agreements and will monitor for compliance.

The City of Gadsden assures that:

1. No person on the basis of race, color or national origin will be subjected to discrimination in the level and quality of transportation services and transit-related benefits.
2. The City of Gadsden will compile, maintain, and submit in a timely manner Title VI information required by FTA Circular 4702.1B and in compliance with the Department of Transportation's Title VI regulations, 49 CFR Part 21.9.
3. The City of Gadsden will make it known to the public that those person or persons alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin as it relates to the provision of transportation service and transit-related benefits may file a complaint with the Federal Transit Administration and / or the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The City Planner for the City of Gadsden shall be the Title VI Coordinator and will have the ultimate authority and responsibility for the agency's adherence to the City of Gadsden Title VI Policy. The Title VI Coordinator shall delegate duties to achieve the policy goals as necessary.

The Transportation Planner shall be delegated as the Title VI Manager. In that capacity, this manager is responsible for managing and implementing all aspects of the Title VI Program as well as to perform the administrative, day-to-day functions of the Title VI Program. Some duties will be delegated as necessary.

Detailed duties and functions of all Title VI functionaries are outlined in the relevant parts of the Title VI Program.

AUTHORITIES:

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (please refer to 23 CFR 200.9 and CFR 21). The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 broadened the scope of Title VI coverage by expanding the definition of terms "programs or activities" to include all programs or activities of Federal Aid recipients, subrecipient's, and contractors, whether such programs and activities are federally assisted or not (P/L. 100-259 [S.557] March 22, 1988). Federal Circular FTA C 4702.1 B details the requirements necessary for compliance and administration of a Title VI program. Additional Authorities and Citations Include: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC 2000d to d0004; 42 USC 4601 to 4655; 23 USC 190(h); 23 USC 324; DOT Order 1050.2 EO 12898; 28 CFR 50.3.


Sherman Guyton
Mayor, City of Gadsden

4/15/16
Date

CITY OF GADSDEN GOVERNMENT

The Federal Transit Administration's Circular 4702.1B requires any recipient-selected boards, advisory committees to be described in a table that includes a racial breakdown and efforts to encourage minority participation.

The Gadsden Transportation Services does not have a Board of Directors. An elected City Council serves as the governing body of the city, exercising legislative powers and representing the interest of the citizens in policy formulation and decision making. It is the goal of the City Council to promote the health, comfort, infrastructure development, economic development, safety, and general welfare of the City of Gadsden. Council Members who are elected by district hold part-time positions and perform legislative functions of the city. The term length is four years.

The Mayor is the Chief Executive Officer for the City. His main responsibility is the enforcement of the City charter and ordinances, recommending policy to the Council and ensuring orderly operation of the city. The composition of the City Council is shown at Appendix 1.

NOTIFICATION OF BENEFICIARIES:

Title 49 CFR Section 21.9(d) and FTA Circular 4702.1B require recipients to provide information to the public regarding the recipient's obligations under DOT's Title VI regulations and apprise members of the public of the protections against discrimination afforded to them by Title VI. At a minimum, recipients shall disseminate this information to the public by posting a Title VI notice on the agency's website and in public areas of the agency's office(s), including the reception desk, meeting rooms, etc. Recipients should also post Title VI notices at stations or stops, and/or on transit vehicles.

The following notice is posted on all GTS vehicles, transit shelters, the main lobby of Gadsden City Hall at 90 Broad Street and Gadsden GTS's website at www.gadسدendot.net.

"The Gadsden Transportation Services (GTS) of the City of Gadsden is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its services on the basis of race, color or national origin as protected by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended ("Title VI"). GTS will also take steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information and other important portions of their programs and activities for Limited English Proficient ("LEP") persons".

If you believe that you have been subjected to discrimination under Title VI, you may file a written complaint with GTS as follows:

*The City of Gadsden
Attention: Title VI Coordinator
P.O. Box 267
90 Broad Street
Gadsden, AL 35902-0267*

The complaint process is at GTS in a Standard Operating Procedure and is shown at Appendix 2.

REQUIREMENT TO DEVELOP TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCEDURES AND COMPLAINT FORM:

In order to comply with the reporting requirements established in 49 CFR Section 21.9(b), all recipients shall develop procedures for investigating and tracking Title VI complaints filed against them and make their procedures for filing a complaint available to members of the public. Recipients must also develop a Title VI complaint form, and the form and procedure for filing a complaint shall be available on the recipient's website. FTA requires direct and primary recipients to report information regarding their complaint procedures in their Title VI Programs in order for FTA to determine compliance with DOT's Title VI regulations

REQUIREMENT TO RECORD AND REPORT TRANSIT-RELATED TITLE VI INVESTIGATIONS, COMPLAINTS, AND LAWSUITS:

In order to comply with the reporting requirements of 49 CFR Section 21.9(b), FTA requires all recipients to prepare and maintain a list of any of the following that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin: active investigations conducted by entities other than FTA; lawsuits; and complaints naming the recipient. This list shall include the date that the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint was filed; a summary of the allegation(s); the status of the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint; and actions taken by the recipient in response, or final findings related to, the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint. This list shall be included in the Title VI Program submitted to FTA every three (3) years.

Currently, there are no lawsuits or complaints levied against the Gadsden Transportation Services (GTS) related to the implementation of the Title VI program. None have been opened or received since the approval of GTS's last Title VI Program in 2013.

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

The content and considerations of Title VI, the Executive Order on LEP, and the DOT LEP Guidance shall be integrated into each recipient's established public participation plan or process.

The Gadsden Public Transportation Department, as a planning partner with the Gadsden / Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO), uses that agency's Public Participation Plan as its own plan in the implementation of transit programs, federal funded projects and programs. This Public Participation Plan was approved by GEMPO on September 20, 2007. A revision is currently under public review. The current plan is shown at Appendix 5.

In addition, GTS will also require public participation meetings for the following:

1. GTS's Annual Program of Projects (POP).
2. Service changes that will result in a 25% decrease / increase in service on the affected route.
3. Fare increases.

Notifications for these meetings will be advertised in at least one local daily newspaper and at least one community monthly and / or weekly newspaper. Notices for meetings dealing with service changes are also posted on transit vehicles and on the GTS's website: www.gadsdendot.net. An invitation to request special services for persons with special needs are included in these notices.

REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO LEP PERSONS:

Consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, DOT's implementing regulations, and Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" (65 FR 50121, Aug. 11, 2000), recipients shall take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to 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 subrecipient’s, 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 subrecipient’s 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 City of Gadsden has chosen not to develop a written LEP plan. However, as documented below, the City of Gadsden currently implements a number of measures to ensure that limited-English speaking clients and customers are afforded access and input into its services and projects. Therefore, City of Gadsden believes that it meets the standard for providing opportunities for meaningful input and access for limited-English speaking customers.

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 to prepare a written LEP plan:

1. The number or proportion 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 or proportion 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 34,392 residents aged five years and over, the City of Gadsden is home to 1,039 residents who speak English “less than very well”. This represents only 3.0 percent of this population group. People of Spanish descent are the primary LEP persons likely to be involved with GTS programs and transit services. They comprise 3% of the population. However, information obtained from transit operators indicates a very minimal interface with passengers from this group on all fixed routes. Feedback from call takers in the Dispatch office for demand response reservations also indicates minimal service requests from this group. The summarized census data is shown at Appendix 3.

The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the recipient to people's lives:

Public transportation and regional transportation planning is vital to many people's lives. According to the Department of Transportation's *Policy Guidance Concerning Recipient's Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons*, "Providing public transportation access to LEP persons is crucial. An LEP person's inability to utilize effectively public transportation may adversely affect his or her ability to obtain health care, or education, or access to employment."

After analyzing the four factors outlined in U.S. DOT policy guidance, the City of Gadsden 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 The City's services. The City of Gadsden staff uses a number of public outreach techniques cited in the GEMPO "Public Participation Plan", including the following:

Interaction with the Limited-English Proficiency Persons:

Public Meetings & Workshops offer customized presentations to existing groups and organizations. Co-host workshops with community groups and business associations 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

"Take one" flyers on transit vehicles and transit hubs

Outreach in the community (flea markets, churches, health centers, etc.)

Include information on meeting notices and how to request translation assistance

Robust use of "visualization" techniques, including maps and graphics to illustrate trends, choices being debated, etc.

Techniques for Involving Limited-English Proficient Populations

Translated documents and web content on key initiatives

On-call translators for meetings

Translated news releases and outreach to alternative language media, such as radio, television, and newspapers

Robust use of visualization techniques, including maps and graphics to choices being debated, etc.

Information / comment tables or booths at community events and public gathering places

Comment cards / "take one" cards on board transit vehicles

Notifying Beneficiaries of Protection

In order to comply with 49 CFR §21.9(d), recipients and subrecipient's shall provide information to beneficiaries regarding their Title VI obligations and apprising beneficiaries of the protections against discrimination afforded to them by Title VI.

The City of Gadsden has established a Policy Statement, per Title VI, for those who benefit from services and / or contracts funded with federal assistance, and this Policy Statement is available to the public. This Policy Statement addresses the City's commitment to avoiding discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The City of Gadsden also takes steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information and other important portions of their programs and activities for Limited English Proficient ("LEP") persons. Coordination and networking with human service organizations providing services to LEP individuals is undertaken to enable dissemination of information regarding GTS programs and services.

Employee Training:

The following training is provided to transit staff and operators regarding Title VI:

- i) Title VI procedures and LEP responsibilities
- ii) Documentation of language assistance requests by users
- iii) Use of language identification flashcards
- iv) Information on handling potential Title VI/LEP complaints
- v) Specific procedures to follow when encountering LEP persons

The following criteria will be used to monitor the LEP Plan:

- i) Frequency of LEP person contacts
- ii) Frequency of use of translation services
- iii) Updating the level of the LEP population in service area
- iv) Number of complaints received
- v) Adequacy of current language assistance program

In addition, the City of Gadsden has developed an Implementation Procedure and Complaint Process that provides the following additional information:

- i) A description of Title VI and the civil rights protections it affords
- ii) Instructions on how to file a Title VI complaint
- iii) A description of the process for handling complaints and notifying the complainant
- iv) A description of who can file complaints and where to file them.

REQUIRED SUBMISSION OF TITLE IV PROGRAM:

To ensure compliance with 49 CFR Section 21.9(b), FTA requires that all recipients document their compliance by submitting a Title VI Program to FTA's regional civil rights officer once every three (3) years. In addition, entities applying for FTA funding for the first time shall provide information regarding their Title VI compliance history if they have previously received funding from another Federal agency. This shall include a copy of any Title VI compliance review activities conducted in the last three (3) years.

As a recipient of federal funding through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the City of Gadsden annually executes and submits Certifications and Assurances to FTA that contain the following certification by City of Gadsden:

"Pursuant to 12 CFR, Part 21, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the sub recipient assures that no person, on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, or disability shall be excluded from participating in, or denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any project, program, or activity (particularly in the level and quality of transportation services and transportation-related benefits) for which the sub recipient receives Federal assistance funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)."

The latest set of certifications and assurances executed by City of Gadsden have been electronically filed with FTA through TrAMS. The list of applicable certifications is shown in Appendix 4.

The City of Gadsden has not been subject to any Title VI compliance reviews by the FTA or other Federal and State agencies.

This Title VI program will be updated every three (3) years as required by FTA Circular 4702.1B. Any changes to the City's Policy Statement and / or Implementation Process and Complaint Procedures will be reported, as will any complaints filed against the City of Gadsden for alleged discrimination under Title VI.

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION AND SERVICE STANDARDS:

The GTS provides fixed route transit service to the citizens of Gadsden through four (4) separate routes. The service routes run from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. All routes are essentially circulators with each route serving particular areas of the city. Three (3) of the routes converge on a central hub located in Central Business District. One fixed route circulates between two main shopping centers, medical facilities district and the Junior College. These services cover most of the City’s main activity centers and residential areas.

As a complement to the fixed route system GTS also operates a paratransit system that provides service on a demand response basis. This service is mainly geared for individuals who are unable to access the fixed route service due to disabilities and /or age. The service days and hours mirror those of the fixed route system.

Fare Policy:

Fare policies are set by the Gadsden City Council. Current fares have been in effect since the year 2000.

Vehicle Headway Assignment / Policy:

The three (3) routes that converge in the CBD operate on hourly headways. Each route departs at the top of the hour and returns up to ten minutes prior to the start of the following hour. Funding constraints limit the GTS ability to reduce the current headway.

Routes	Headway	Base Frequency	Saturday Frequency
Gadsden Regional	60 minutes	60	60
Central	60 minutes	60	60
West	60 minutes	60	60
Gadsden State	45 minutes	60	60

On-Time Performance Policy:

The Gadsden Transportation Services has maintained a policy that requires route review for any service that is unable to achieve a 75% on-time rate. Such a review could lead to additional training / personnel considerations and route restructuring (if a chief concern is passenger load).

Service Availability Policy:

The Gadsden Transportation Services has maintained a policy of maximum access to service within the Gadsden city limits. Specifically, GTS’s goal has been to provide service coverage accessible within ½ mile for 75% of Gadsden’s residents, and ¼ mile for 40% of Gadsden’s residents.

Vehicle Load Standards/Assignment Policy:

The Gadsden Transportation Services operates two sizes of modified vans in fixed-route service. Load factors for each are as follows.

Vehicle Type	Seated Capacity	Standing	Total	Wheelchairs	Max Load
25’ Bus	13	2	15	2	1.2
30’ Bus	23	4	27	3	1.2

From these vehicle types, assignments take into consideration the following factors:

1. Route passenger load.

GTS's 30' vehicles are primarily assigned to GTS's three primary routes that converge on the CBD. These routes, on average, carry the largest number of passengers as shown in the table below. The average route length for service is about 14.1 miles. All of these routes also provide non-discriminatory access to these larger vehicles.

Route	Average Daily Ridership	Route Length(miles)
Gadsden Regional	145	13.2
Central	90	14.3
West	120	15.4
Gadsden State	30	13.5

2. GTS's 25' vehicles are used to service the less busy Gadsden State route. They also provide back up when the other vehicles are unavailable due to maintenance and repair needs.

3. Vehicle age.

It is GTS policy to replace buses and vans when they reach the end of their service lives.

4. Vehicle Amenities.

All vehicles, regardless of age, have working air conditioning, heating and wheelchair lift equipment. Rather than assign these vehicles to particular routes, vehicles without these amenities are considered in need of maintenance and care is taken to avoid the need to provide service with those conditions.

Transit Amenities:

The Gadsden Transportation Services assigns transit amenities – bus shelters and benches – based on the type of stop and the activity at the stop. GTS will consider transit amenities for any stop that experiences increased boarding's per day. In addition, stops that are at high activity locations receive priority consideration for amenities. Other considerations that affect the provision of amenities include:

1. Location near an activity center or business district.
2. Funding partnership with other agencies or organizations.
3. Neighborhood improvement considerations in low-income / blighted / redevelopment areas.

GTS currently has federal funds for new shelters and benches. High-activity and high-visibility locations will be the focus for the deployment of these amenities.

APPENDIX 1

Gadsden City Council Composition

District	Incumbent	Race	
1	Cynthia W. Toles	African American	
2	Deverick Williams	African American	
3	Thomas Worthy	African American	
4	Bob Echols	White	
5	Billy Billingsley	African American	
6	Johnny Cannon	White	
7	Ben Reed	White	

Appendix 2

Title VI Complaint Policy for Gadsden Transportation Service

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S. Code Section 2000d et seq., prohibits any person from being excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance, on the ground of race, color or national origin. The City of Gadsden provides various transportation services to the public with federal financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration. These transportation services are provided under the name of Gadsden Transportation Services (GTS) and are part of the Planning Department of the City of Gadsden, an Alabama municipal corporation. This policy applies to all complaints filed under Title VI relating to any program or activity administered by the Gadsden Transportation Services.

Intimidation or retaliation of any kind is prohibited by law. A person filing a complaint pursuant to this policy may also file formal complaints with other state or federal agencies, or seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination in the provision of transportation services. The procedures established under this policy are part of an administrative process that does not provide for remedies such as compensatory or punitive damages or other remuneration for the complainant.

Every effort will be made to obtain early resolution of a complaint at the lowest level possible. The option of informal mediation between the affected parties and the Title VI Coordinator for GTS may be used to resolve the complaint at any stage of the process. The Title VI Coordinator will make every effort to pursue a resolution to the complaint. Initial interviews with the complainant and other individuals relevant to the complaint will request information regarding specifically requested relief and settlement opportunities.

The Title VI Coordinator for GTS is the Director of Planning of the City of Gadsden, currently Nick Hall, whose office is located at Room 302, City Hall, 90 Broad Street, Gadsden, Alabama 35901. The contact information for the Coordinator is as follows:

- i) Mailing address is P.O. Box 267, Gadsden, Alabama 35902-0267.
- ii) Telephone number is (256) 549-4520; fax number is (256) 549-4851 and e-mail address: nhall@cityofgadsden.com.

1. Any individual, group of individuals, or entity that believes they have been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI may file a written complaint. A formal complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged occurrence or when the alleged discrimination became known to the complainant. The complaint must meet the following requirements:
 - a. Complaint shall be in writing and signed by the complainant(s).
 - b. Include the date of the alleged act of discrimination (date when the complainant(s) became victim of the alleged discriminatory conduct).

- c. Present a detailed description of the issues, including names and job titles of those individuals perceived as parties in the incident.
 - d. Allegations received by fax or e-mail will be acknowledged and processed only when the identity of the complainant and the intent of the complainant to proceed with the complaint have been established. To establish these requirements, the complainant must mail a signed, original copy of the fax or e-mail transmittal to the Title VI Coordinator.
 - e. Allegations received by telephone will be transcribed and provided to the complainant for confirmation or revision before processing. A complaint form will be forwarded to the complainant to complete, sign, and return to the Title VI Coordinator.
2. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Title VI Coordinator will determine whether the matters complained of are within the jurisdiction of Title VI, acceptability, and need for additional information. The Title VI Coordinator will begin to investigate the merit of the complaint.

Complaints against GTS will be referred to the Alabama Department of Transportation's (ALDOT) Title VI Coordinator, the Federal Highway Administration or the Federal Transit Administration, as appropriate, for proper disposition pursuant to their procedures. In special cases where the Title VI Coordinator determines that equity, fairness and a full investigation by them instead of the City of Gadsden would be appropriate, these agencies may assume jurisdiction and either complete or obtain services to review or investigate matters.

Complainants can also submit written complaints directly to the Federal Transit Administration at the following address:

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Civil Rights
Title VI Program Coordinator
East Building, 5th Floor – TCR
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

3. In order to be accepted, a complaint must meet the following criteria:
 - a. The complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged occurrence or when the alleged discrimination became known to the complainant.
 - b. The allegations must involve a covered basis such as race, color or national origin.
 - c. The allegations must involve a program or activity of GTS or a contractor with GTS.
 - d. The complainant must accept reasonable resolution based on the City of Gadsden's administrative authority, with reasonability to be determined by GTS.
4. A complaint may be dismissed for the following reasons:
 - a. The complainant requests the withdrawal of the complaint.
 - b. The complainant fails to respond to repeated requests for additional information needed to process the complaint.
 - c. The complainant cannot be located after reasonable attempts.

5. Once the City of Gadsden or ALDOT decide to accept the complaint for investigation, the complainant will be notified in writing within five (5) calendar days of such determination. The complaint will receive a case number and will be filed in public records identifying the basis for the alleged harm, and the race, color and national origin of the complainant.
6. GTS will provide any person alleged to have committed discrimination (the respondent) with the opportunity to respond to the allegations in writing. The respondent will have 10 calendar days from the date of GTS's written notification of acceptance of the complaint to respond to the allegations.
7. Within 40 calendar days of the acceptance of the complaint, the Title VI Coordinator will prepare an investigative report concerning the alleged incident. The report will include a narrative description of the incident; identify persons interviewed, findings, and recommendation for disposition.
8. The investigative report and its findings will be sent to City of Gadsden City Attorney for review. The City Attorney will review the report and associated documentation and will provide input to the Title VI Coordinator within ten (10) calendar days.
9. Any comments or recommendations from City Attorney will be reviewed by GTS and Title VI Coordinator. The report will be modified as needed and made final for its release.
10. The final investigative report and a copy of the complaint will be forwarded to ALDOT's Title VI Coordinator within 60 calendar days of the acceptance of the complaint. ALDOT's Title VI Coordinator will share the report with FHWA and FTA Region IV Offices, as part of its Annual Title VI Update and Accomplishment Report.
11. GTS will notify the parties of its preliminary findings, which are subject to concurrence from ALDOT's Title VI Coordinator. ALDOT's Title VI Coordinator will issue the final decision to GTS based on GTS's investigative report.
12. When ALDOT's Title VI Coordinator issues a final decision, GTS will notify all parties involved of the determination. ALDOT's final determination is not subject to further appeal.
13. For a complaint investigated solely by GTS, the complainant or respondent may appeal to ALDOT if not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation. ALDOT will analyze the facts of the case and will issue its conclusion to the appellant according to their procedures.

City of Gadsden

Title VI Complaint Form

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requires that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Please provide information on this form in order to assist us in the processing your complaint. Should you require any assistance in completing this form, please let us know.

Section I:				
Name:				
Address:				
Telephone (Home):			Telephone (Work):	
Electronic Mail Address:				
Accessible Format Requirements?	Large Print		Audio Tape	
	TDD		Other	
Section II:				
Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf?			Yes*	No
*If you answered "yes" to this question, go to Section III.				
If not, please supply the name and relationship of the person for whom you are complaining:				
Please explain why you have filed for a third party: _____				
Please confirm that you have obtained the permission of the aggrieved party if you are filing on behalf of a third party.			Yes	No
Section III:				
I believe the discrimination I experienced was based on (check all that apply):				
<input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> National Origin				
Date of Alleged Discrimination (Month, Day, Year): _____				
Explain as clearly as possible what happened and why you believe you were discriminated against. Describe all persons who were involved. Include the name and contact information of the person(s) who discriminated against you (if known) as well as names and contact information of any witnesses. If more space is needed, please use the back of this form.				
Section IV				
Have you previously filed a Title VI complaint with this agency?			Yes	No

Section V

Have you filed this complaint with any other Federal, State, or local agency, or with any Federal or State court?
 Yes No

If yes, check all that apply:

Federal Agency: _____

Federal Court _____

State Agency _____ State Court

Local Agency _____

Please provide information about a contact person at the agency/court where the complaint was filed.

Name:

Title:

Agency:

Address:

Telephone:

Section VI

Name of agency complaint is against:

Contact person:

Title:

Telephone number:

You may attach any written materials or other information that you think is relevant to your complaint. Signature and date required below. The City of Gadsden cannot accept this complaint form without a signature.

Signature

Date

Please submit this form in person at the address below, or mail this form to:
City of Gadsden
Attention: Title VI Coordinator
P.O. Box 267
90 Broad Street
Gadsden, AL 35902-0267

Appendix 3

<u>City of Gadsden Languages Spoken at Home</u>		
Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English For the Population 5 Years and Over	Total	Percent of Population
<i>Total resident population 5 years and older</i>	34,027	100
<i>Speak English only</i>	32,258	94.8%
<i>Language other than English</i>	1,769	5.2%
<i>Spanish or Spanish Creole</i>	1,259	3.7%
<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	791	2.3%
<i>Other Indo-European languages</i>	190	0.6%
<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	39	0.1%
<i>Asian and Pacific Islander languages</i>	197	0.6%
<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	142	0.4%
<i>Other languages</i>	81	0.2%
<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	67	0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Appendix 4

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2016 CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES FOR FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Name of Applicant: _____
The Applicant agrees to comply with applicable provisions of Categories 01 – 23 or the Applicant agrees to comply with applicable provisions of the Categories it has selected:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Selection</u>
01.	Required Certifications and Assurances for Each Applicant.	
02.	Lobbying.	
03.	Procurement and Procurement Systems.	
04.	Private Sector Protections.	
05.	Rolling Stock Reviews and Bus Testing.	
06.	Demand Responsive Service.	
07.	Intelligent Transportation Systems.	
08.	Interest and Financing Costs and Acquisition of Capital Assets by Lease.	
09.	Transit Asset Management Plan and Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.	
10.	Alcohol and Controlled Substances Testing.	
11.	Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants Program (New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity Improvement).	
12.	State of Good Repair Program.	
13.	Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities and Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Grant Programs.	
14.	Urbanized Area Formula Grants Programs and Passenger Ferry Grant Program.	
15.	Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Programs.	
16.	Rural Areas and Appalachian Development Programs.	
17.	Tribal Transit Programs (Public Transportation on Indian Reservations Programs).	
18.	State Safety Oversight Grant Program.	
19.	Public Transportation Emergency Relief Program.	
21.	Infrastructure Finance Programs.	
22.	Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program.	
23.	Hiring Preferences	

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2016 FTA CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES SIGNATURE PAGE

(Required of all Applicants for federal assistance to be awarded
by FTA and all FTA Grantees with an active Capital or Formula Award)

AFFIRMATION OF APPLICANT

Name of the Applicant: _____

Name and Relationship of the Authorized Representative: _____

BY SIGNING BELOW, on behalf of the Applicant, I declare that it has duly authorized me to make these Certifications and Assurances and bind its compliance. Thus, it agrees to comply with all federal laws, regulations, and requirements, follow applicable federal guidance, and comply with the Certifications and Assurances as indicated on the foregoing page applicable to each application its Authorized Representative makes to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in federal fiscal year 2016, irrespective of whether the individual that acted on his or her Applicant's behalf continues to represent it.

FTA intends that the Certifications and Assurances the Applicant selects on the other side of this document should apply to each Award for which it now seeks, or may later seek federal assistance to be awarded by FTA during federal fiscal year 2016.

The Applicant affirms the truthfulness and accuracy of the Certifications and Assurances it has selected in the statements submitted with this document and any other submission made to FTA, and acknowledges that the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986, 31 U.S.C. § 3801 *et seq.*, and implementing U.S. DOT regulations, "Program Fraud Civil Remedies," 49 CFR part 31, apply to any certification, assurance or submission made to FTA. The criminal provisions of 18 U.S.C. § 1001 apply to any certification, assurance, or submission made in connection with a federal public transportation program authorized by 49 U.S.C. chapter 53 or any other statute.

In signing this document, I declare under penalties of perjury that the foregoing Certifications and Assurances, and any other statements made by me on behalf of the Applicant are true and accurate.

Signature _____ Date _____

Name _____
Authorized Representative of Applicant

AFFIRMATION OF APPLICANT'S ATTORNEY

For (Name of Applicant): _____

As the undersigned Attorney for the above named Applicant, I hereby affirm to the Applicant that it has authority under state, local, or tribal government law, as applicable, to make and comply with the Certifications and Assurances as indicated on the foregoing pages. I further affirm that, in my opinion, the Certifications and Assurances have been legally made and constitute legal and binding obligations on it.

I further affirm that, to the best of my knowledge, there is no legislation or litigation pending or imminent that might adversely affect the validity of these Certifications and Assurances, or of the performance of its FTA assisted Award.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Name _____

Appendix 5

Public Involvement Plan

Gadsden Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization

(GEMPO)



Public Involvement Plan



Gadsden Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO)

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Preface	1
II. Access to Agency Records and Information	1
III. Public Involvement Process	1
IV. Notice Procedures	2
V. Receipt of Public Comments	5
VI. Extension of Public Comment Period	5
VII. Section 5307 Grant Recipients - Public Participation Process	5
VIII. Title VI and Environmental Justice	6
IX. Scope of Official Records	7
X. Major Planning Products	7
XI. Reviewing the PIP for Effectiveness	8
Appendices	10
Appendix I: Public Participation Evaluation	10

I. PREFACE

The Gadsden Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization's (GEMPO) policy is to have a proactive public involvement process that provides timely information and public notification for all Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) activities. Furthermore, it is GEMPO's policy to solicit early public involvement from the communities most affected by its plans, process and projects.

These policies are intended to inform the public of GEMPO's outreach efforts and guide GEMPO staff in involving the public in Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning and programming activities. These efforts include, but are not limited to: the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP); the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); the Public Involvement Plan (PIP); and special local studies such as bicycle/pedestrian plans, corridor studies and transit studies.

As part of its general planning and programming process, GEMPO shall try to involve as broad a cross-section of the population and the region as possible such as: citizens, member municipalities, affected public agencies, public and private transportation providers, representatives of transportation agency employees or unions, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled and other interested parties. For special studies, GEMPO shall make an effort to identify and involve individuals and groups that might be affected by potential changes to the particular transportation service or facility under review, in addition to those engaged through the general planning process. Examples include abutting property owners, neighborhood associations, transit riders and businesses within the study area.

Appendix A shows definitions of key terms used in this document.

II. ACCESS TO GEMPO RECORDS AND INFORMATION

The Agency shall make, keep and maintain meeting records; hold meetings open to the public; and file yearly notices of regular Agency meetings with all participating municipalities.

It is GEMPO policy that citizens should have access to sufficient information about any matter to be decided so they can initiate proposals and react knowledgeably to the proposals of others. A cross section of all citizen views shall be encouraged and solicited.

All documents and meeting records should be available to interested citizens. If a member of the public would like to meet at a time outside of GEMPO staff's core hours, staff shall make an appointment with that person at a mutually agreeable date and time.

GEMPO staff shall make available GEMPO meeting minutes upon request.

III PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

A. Meeting Protocol

The Agency will work to keep meetings and public hearings brief, to the point, orderly, and consistent with the established agenda items or hearing materials. GEMPO shall include on all GEMPO Agenda an item for "Citizen Comments and/or Correspondence" A specific time will be set aside on all meeting and hearing agendas for public involvement. The Chairperson or hearing officer will have the right to set a time limit for public comments.

B. Accessibility - GEMPO staff shall be available to the public Monday through Friday (Public holidays excepted) from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and by appointment, in the Transportation Planning Office located at 1699 Chestnut Street, Gadsden, Alabama. Contact telephone numbers are (256) 549-4519 or (256) 549-4832. Staff shall also be available to make presentations to groups, as requested. During public comment periods, copies of the subject documents will be available in the Transportation Planning office, on the Agency website, at the seven municipal clerks' offices and at the main library branches in the region's seven towns for review. An interpreter for the deaf or for those with limited English proficiency can be made available if requested at least 5 working days prior to the meeting. Where possible, meetings held outside of the regular meeting venue will be held at facilities that are ADA accessible and at times and locations that are accessible via public transportation.

IV. NOTICE PROCEDURES

A. Agency Meetings - For the GEMPO Policy and other Committees, regular meeting agenda and meeting notices at which Agency policies and programs are established are mailed or emailed at least 7 calendar days prior to the meeting, to the region's municipal clerks for posting and to Committee Members. Special meeting agendas and notices are mailed or emailed at least 6 calendar days prior to the meeting to Policy Committee members and to the region's municipal clerks for posting. An annual schedule of all regular meetings is sent to all municipal clerks in the region and posted on the GEMPO website. As a general rule GEMPO Policy and Technical Advisory Committees meet on the second Thursday of every other month starting in January. The Citizens Advisory and Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenways Advisory Committees meet on the first Tuesday of every other month beginning in January.

B. Mailing List - GEMPO shall maintain an MPO mailing list. Notices of GEMPO Policy and Advisory Committee meetings will be sent to those on the MPO mailing list. GEMPO staff will include, to the extent possible, private transportation firms, news media, social service agencies, groups representing minorities, bicycle groups and any citizens wishing to be included.

C. Public Hearings/Public Informational Meetings - Public Hearings will be held prior to the adoption of Long-Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs), Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs), Public Involvement Plan and Special Studies. When developing a new plan or making a major modification to the an existing regional transportation plan, the GEMPO will consult "as appropriate" with State and local agencies for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, and historic preservation, with particular but not exclusive emphasis on potential environmental mitigation activities. This consultation will help the GEMPO achieve its related goal of promoting consistency between planned transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns. There shall be a comment period associated with all public hearings. A summary of significant comments and the disposition of the comments shall be provided in the final document. Public involvement requirements for minor amendments and administrative actions applied to the TIP shall be satisfied by the regular notification process described for meetings of the MPO Policy and Advisory Committees. Those minor amendments and actions shall appear individually on the MPO meeting agenda.

D. GEMPO Website - The GEMPO shall maintain a calendar of meetings and activities on its

website. The website will also contain copies of appropriate reports and plans that individuals can read online or download to their own computer. Draft documents will be made available on the GEMPO website in advance of any decision to be made by the GEMPO policy board.

E. Meeting Locations - All meetings will be scheduled at convenient and accessible times and places. Regularly scheduled meetings of the MPO Policy and Advisory Committees are normally held at an accessible and conveniently located facility, usually the offices of the Gadsden Etowah Chamber of Commerce at 1 Commerce Square, Gadsden, Alabama.

Sufficient notice will be provided to the public and interested citizens when occasional modifications to this schedule are necessary. Scheduling of public information meetings held for special planning studies, both time and place, will be determined based on the suggestions of appropriate stakeholders.

F. Visualization - In an effort to better describe each plan or program under consideration by the citizens and interested parties, the GEMPO will employ appropriate visualization techniques. These techniques often include handouts, maps and graphics on presentation boards, and/or electronic presentations (such as Power Point). When available and appropriate, the GEMPO may also use visualization software, transportation models, animation and DVD's.

The following procedure is to be used when planning public hearings for the Policy Board:

Table 1: Public Hearing Procedures

Time Frame	Agency/Person Notified	Form of Notification
Minimum 7 days prior to first date of public review period	All City and County clerks' offices	Public notices /agenda and copies of relevant planning documents
Minimum 7 days prior to first date of public review period	Gadsden Times, Messenger & Reporter Newspapers	Public notices for publication
Minimum 7 days prior to first date of public review period	Mayors and Commissioners	Copies of press releases and planning documents
Minimum 5 days prior to first date of public review period	MPO members and web site	Notice and copies of planning documents

A 45-day public review period is required for revisions to the Public Involvement Plan. If the final plan differs significantly from the one that was made available for public comment, an additional opportunity for public comment will be made with one additional public hearing, which will be noticed in the Gadsden Times(daily publication), Messenger(weekly community newspaper) and Reporter (monthly community newspaper) newspapers. All persons who make comments will be acknowledged via telephone, mail or email.

Table 2: Document Review Process

Document	Review Period	Public Meetings
L RTP	30 days	3 meetings as follows: i) During draft process ii) After rough draft iii) Public hearing
Special Studies	30 days	3 meetings as follows: i) During draft process ii) After rough draft iii) Public hearing
TIP	30 days	One public hearing
PIP	45 days	One public hearing

All meeting notices will be sent to municipal clerks, who will be asked to post them for the benefit of the public, and will be posted on the Agency web site. Relevant special interest groups known to the GEMPO will be notified of public hearings and public informational meetings.

On the public information meeting and public hearing dates, directional arrows will be placed on building doors, elevators and hallways. Public Notices, summarizing opportunities for commenting on the draft LRTP or draft major amendment, will include date, time, place, subject and filing of notice with municipal clerks and will note that the plan can be reviewed at the GEMPO and, municipal clerks' offices as well as, and main branch libraries. Notices to clerks will include date, time, place and subject and a request to post and keep planning document on file until date of hearing or end of comment period, whichever, is later. Notices to other local elected officials will include a press release and an offer of copies of the planning documents.

V. RECEIPT OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any public comments and responses will be included in the appendices of all documents. GEMPO shall provide a summary of how it responded to significant public comments during the development of a plan or document. This summary may be produced as a separate report or included in the appendices of the planning document. Those who submit written comments will receive responses within 10 working days, provided they provide a mailing address or email address. They will also receive notice of any meetings or hearings associated with completion of the plan in question.

VI. EXTENSION OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

If a final planning document differs significantly from the one that was made available for public comment and/or raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have anticipated, GEMPO will make available an added comment period of at least 30 days. This additional comment period will be advertised just as the original comment period was. Those who made comments—provided they provided contact information—will be personally notified of the additional period.

VII. SECTION 5307 GRANTS - PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The public involvement plan as described herein and as adopted by the GEMPO for its TIP shall also serve to satisfy all of the public involvement requirements, including provision for public notice and time established for public review and comment, of City of Gadsden and other municipalities as applicant for regular Section 5307 (FTA Transit Capital & Operating) and other FTA funded grants.

VIII. TITLE VI AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The GEMPO will incorporate the tenets of the 1994 Executive Order on Environmental Justice (EO 12898), USDOT Order 5610.2 of April 1997, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and related guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Public Notices regarding regular and special meetings of the GEMPO and its subcommittees shall be provided to stakeholders of particular interest to low income and minority groups. Staff shall create and maintain a database of such stakeholders, which includes but is limited to: transit groups, social service agencies, community-based organizations, media outlets that target minority groups, civic clubs, neighborhood revitalization zones, homeowner associations, and neighborhood organizations. At a minimum, GEMPO shall identify any groups that it needs to involve, add them to the appropriate mailing lists and define methods for engaging them in relevant programs and projects.

Additionally, notice designed to disseminate information to the above-mentioned groups shall be sent to appropriate media. Newsletters and web site postings shall contain advance notice of public hearings, public informational meetings and regular and special meetings of the GEMPO and its subcommittees.

IX. SCOPE OF OFFICIAL RECORDS

The official records of the GEMPO shall consist of, but not be limited to, all bylaws, minutes, resolutions, contracts, referrals and grant applications. These official records of the GEMPO will be maintained by the Agency and will be available in the office files for public inspection during regular working hours.

X. MAJOR PLANNING PRODUCTS

A. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) - The LRTP is produced every five (5) years to satisfy the federal MPO requirement. The LRTP is developed in the following steps:

1. Data collection
2. Public informational/public input meetings
3. Plan creation
4. Public informational period
5. Public Hearings
6. Ratification of the Plan

Public input is first sought at the public information/public input meeting(s). GEMPO hosts multiple meetings designed to inform the public about the LRTP process and to gather public input about the direction the transportation system should take over the period of the LRTP. During the thirty (30) day public informational period, a draft of the LRTP is placed at the Transportation Planning Office, GEMPO web site, City Halls and main libraries of the MPO's participating members.

During this time, the public may comment on the LRTP by writing, faxing, emailing or calling the agency, as well as by coming to the GEMPO Office in person. The final Plan after adoption by the GEMPO Policy Committee will also be posted to the GEMPO website and be available there until an updated or new Plan is adopted.

B. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - The TIP is compiled every four (4) years. The TIP lists all federally-funded surface transportation projects scheduled for implementation in the region over this period. The TIP is developed in the following steps:

1. Inclusion of projects from ALDOT
2. Inclusion of local projects
2. Creation of Draft TIP
3. Public informational period
4. Public Hearings
5. Ratification of the TIP

Public input is first sought at the public informational meeting held before the public comment period. During the public informational period, a draft of the TIP is placed at the GEMPO Office and the City Halls and main libraries of the MPO's seven participating governments for a period of thirty (30) days. During this time, the public may comment on the TIP by writing, faxing, emailing or calling the agency as well as by showing up in person. The public is also afforded such opportunity at the public hearings held for the plan. Over the course of its four (4) year planning period, the TIP may require amendments and revisions.

The requirements for revisions shall be satisfied by following the standard procedures for MPO Policy and Advisory Committee meetings. Minutes of the meetings adopting revisions will be posted on the GEMPO website. The requirements for **minor and administrative amendments** shall be satisfied by public notification and posting on the GEMPO website for a minimum of 30 days prior to a decision by the GEMPO Policy Committee. The final amendments will also be posted to the GEMPO website as soon as possible after their adoption. The final TIP will also be posted to the GEMPO website after its adoption, and made available there at least until an updated or new TIP is adopted.

C. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - The UPWP is an annually produced description of MPO transportation activities to be undertaken during the current fiscal year. Public involvement is addressed in Task 11, which lists activities related to public involvement for all elements of the planning process. The draft UPWP is available for review and approval by the GEMPO Policy and Advisory Committees prior to submission to ALDOT and FHWA for approval. The final UPWP document is posted on the GEMPO website for the duration of the fiscal year.

D. Annual Listing of Projects - An annual listing of authorized projects, including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year shall be made available on the GEMPO website. The listing is developed by the ALDOT and will be consistent with categories identified in the TIP.

E. Coordination- All the major MPO planning products will be coordinated with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation process.

XI. REVIEWING THE PIP FOR EFFECTIVENESS

The United States Department of Transportation recently issued a Title VI Process Review Report, which states that MPOs must “Develop and document a systematic way to review the effectiveness of public outreach efforts and citizen involvement, and include in the next update of the public participation guidelines.” Therefore, GEMPO has created an evaluation process that will help it understand the effectiveness of the PIP. Each planning document GEMPO produces that is subject to the rules of this PIP, will be monitored by staff in terms of attendance and input. When the PIP is reviewed, this data will be used to determine the PIP’s effectiveness and to guide creation of the next PIP. Attendees will be asked to fill out the brief survey about the PIP process.

Additionally, the annual review includes an evaluation of:

- outreach strategies,
- visualization techniques,
- venue accessibility
- MPO distribution list entries
- website design
- disposition of public comments
- grantor and other partner agencies’ input

Table 3: Public Involvement Evaluation Tools

<u>Public Involvement Tool</u>	<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>	<u>Performance Goal(s)</u>	<u>Performance Strategies</u>
<i>Scheduled Meetings</i>	Track attendance of appointed members and alternates	Strive for 100% attendance from committee or least a quorum (50%) for each scheduled meeting	Outline minimum standards for attendance in MPO Bylaws and address issue with appointing officials
	Track attendance of other stakeholders and their participation	Encourage attendance of non appointees. Aim for 3-5% affected population.	Post meeting dates at prominent locations
<i>Printed Materials & Handouts</i>	Guides and Regulatory guidelines/updates distributed	Distribute to new persons in MPO database, contact lists and at community events	Identify interested persons at public or special events
<i>Requests for Information</i>	Number of verbal, phone, written and other requests for information	Respond to general public requests for information	Develop Public Involvement contact logs to document information provided
<i>MPO Website</i>	Keep tally of site visitors	Adopt user friendly and informative website	Increase links to related sites and post press releases
<i>News Releases/Articles</i>	Track news articles and level of press coverage	Strive for increased and diverse press coverage of MPO activities	Maintain positive relationship with media personnel and issue regular press releases
<i>Project Specific Events</i>	Document public attendance & involvement in activities for special projects	Set minimum threshold participation by affected population	Select convenient locations and times for activities

Appendix A: Definitions

Amendment – Revision to the LRTP, TIP involving major changes to a project including the addition or deletion of a project or major change in project cost, design concept or scope. This is a revision requiring public review and comment.

Gadsden Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization (GEMPO)–GEMPO is the metropolitan planning agency for the Cities of Attalla, Gadsden, Glencoe, Hokes Bluff, Reece City, Rainbow City and Southside as well as portions of Etowah County within the Study Area boundary.

Long-Range Transportation Plan–The Long-Range Transportation Plan is developed every five (5) years. The Plan lays out the region’s desired transportation system and actions over a 25 year time period.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)–A federally-designated entity that is responsible for conducting regional transportation planning and selecting federally-funded projects in an urban area.

Public Hearing–During the planning process, one or two public hearings may be held to allow the public to voice its opinions and concerns about the plan being considered. Public hearings take place near the end of the planning process and testimony is often recorded.

Public Informational Meeting–Public informational meetings are held during the planning process. Their purposes are to inform the public about planning activities and to solicit public input. They may be held early or late in the planning process.

Public Involvement Plan (PIP)–The PIP is necessary to guide staff in its planning endeavors and to let the public know GEMPO’s strategy for public involvement.

Revision – A change to the LRTP or TIP that occurs between scheduled updates. A major revision is an ‘amendment’ while a minor one is an ‘administrative modification.’

Special Local Studies–Sometimes GEMPO may obtain funding to conduct transportation studies beyond those required of MPOs. These can include, but are not limited to, bicycle/pedestrian plans, corridor studies and transit studies.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)–The TIP is the annual programming of all federal transportation funding in the region over a four (4) year period. NO federally funded project can be implemented if the MPO does not incorporate it into the TIP. The TIP can be amended throughout the four year period.

Update – Making current an LRTP or TIP through a comprehensive review. Updates require public review and comment and demonstration of fiscal constraint.

Visualization Techniques – Methods used in the development of transportation plans and programs with the public, elected officials and stakeholders in a clear and easily accessible format to promote improved understanding of existing or proposed transportation plans and programs.