

Fiscal Year 2023 Review of the

2023 Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

for the

**Tuscaloosa Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Adopted August 28, 2023

Vision Statement

It is the vision of the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to have a community that understands the transportation planning process and actively participates in the process.

Goals

- I. Open Process: To have an open planning process that encourages early and continued public participation
- II. Information Access: To provide complete and timely information regarding the plans, programs, procedures, policies, and technical data produced or used during the planning process to interested parties and the general public
- III. Notice of Activities: To provide timely and adequate public notice of meetings, reviews, and major document availability
- IV. Public Input and Organization Response: To demonstrate consideration and recognition of public input and to provide appropriate responses to public input
- V. Inclusive Process: To encourage participation in the planning process by low-income groups, minorities, persons with disabilities, and the elderly; and to consider the needs of these groups when developing programs and plans

Strategies

- A. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will maintain a citizens advisory committee. The committee will serve as one of the standing committees of the transportation planning process. (The standing committees are the Metropolitan Planning Organization - Policy Committee, the Technical Coordinating Committee, the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee.)
- B. All meetings of the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will be open to the public in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act (2005-40) and will provide non-committee members an opportunity to participate in the planning process. The meetings will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times. Generally, the Policy Committee meets on the last Monday of even-numbered months at 2:00 p.m., the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) meets on the third Thursday of even-numbered months at 10:00 a.m., the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) meets on the third Tuesday of even-numbered months at 5:00 p.m., and the BPC meets on the third Monday of even-numbered months at 10:00 a.m. An exception to this schedule occurs in December due to holidays. The meetings are almost always held at the West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC) office, 4200 Highway 69 North, Northport. Goals Addressed: I, IV, V
- C. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will provide a notice for all meetings of the standing committees of the transportation planning process. The notice will include the agenda, date, time, and location of the

meeting. The notice will be provided at least two weeks prior to the meetings. The notice will be provided to local media representatives and groups that address the needs of low-income groups, minorities, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. The notice will request that interested individuals, who need special accommodations, notify the West Alabama Regional Commission at least two days prior to the date of the meeting so necessary arrangements can be made. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will follow all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The notice will also be posted on the Internet. Goals Addressed: I, II, III, V

D. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will do the following as a means of seeking out and considering the needs of the traditionally underserved (low-income individuals, minorities, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and limited English proficient persons):

- 1) provide MPO standing committee meeting notices to groups that address the needs of the traditionally underserved;
- 2) provide Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) public meeting notices to groups that address the needs of the traditionally underserved;
- 3) upon request, provide transportation planning process meeting notices to any individual or group;
- 4) allow anyone to participate in all transportation planning process meetings;
- 5) follow all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act while conducting the transportation planning process;
- 6) if feasible and appropriate, modify the transportation planning process and any plan, program, or document developed as part of the process to meet the needs of the traditionally underserved;
- 7) if warranted, provide an interpreter for those with limited English proficiency;
- 8) offer translation of our website and documents on our website to other languages;
- 9) if requested, make presentations to groups representing traditionally underserved populations;
- 10) provide transportation planning process information at community events;
- 11) hold extended public review periods for the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that allow anyone to review the documents in public places, including the WARC office, and on the Internet and allow comments to be submitted in person, by email, by postal mail, and by FAX;
- 12) make the MPO staff available to discuss any transportation planning document or the planning process with any group or individual;

Goals Addressed: I, II, III, IV, V

E. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will do the following as a means of consulting and coordinating with agencies and officials

responsible for other planning activities within the Metropolitan Planning Area that are affected by transportation:

- 1) provide MPO standing committee meeting notices to agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities;
- 2) provide Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) public meeting notices to agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities;
- 3) once a year, send a letter to agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities that describe the planning process, lists up-coming MPO meetings, and requests copies of plans, maps, and inventories;
- 4) prior to adoption of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), provide a link to the draft documents to agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities and request that the agencies and officials provide information regarding any conflicts with relevant plans, maps, and inventories;
- 5) prior to adoption of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), compare any provided plans, maps, and inventories with the MPO plans and programs; and note all conflicts;

Goals Addressed: I, II, III, IV, V

F. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will hold an annual training session. The training session will review the transportation planning process and the functions of the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. The training session will be open to the general public. Goals Addressed: I, II, V

G. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will consider all legitimate inquiries and comments regarding transportation planning activities. When warranted a written response will be provided. All public inquiries and comments received regarding the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be included in the final document with the corresponding responses provided by the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Goals Addressed: I, IV, V

H. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will maintain a record of public involvement. The record will document the public involvement activities of the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for a one-year period. Goals Addressed: I, II, IV

I. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will make available to the general public and government agencies all documents and appropriate technical data produced for the transportation planning process. The documents and technical data, as appropriate and feasible, will be available in paper copy, digital copy, and on the Internet. Goals Addressed: I, II, IV, V

J. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will provide public notification of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development. The notification will be provided at least two weeks prior to any scheduled meetings. The draft document will be available for public review and comment for at least 30 days prior to final adoption. Goals Addressed: I, II, III, IV, V

K. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will hold a public meeting for the Draft Long-Range Transportation Plan and Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prior to the final adoption of the document. Notification will be provided at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The meetings will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times. Goals Addressed: I, II, III, IV, V

L. If a Long-Range Transportation Plan or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) varies significantly from the version that was initially made available for public comment, the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will hold an additional public meeting prior to the final adoption of the document. The draft document will be available for public review and comment for at least 30 days prior to final adoption. Goals Addressed: I, II, III, IV, V

M. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will use visualization techniques, as appropriate and feasible, to describe the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. Goals Addressed: I, II, III, IV, V

N. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, when appropriate and feasible, will coordinate public involvement activities with statewide transportation planning public involvement and cooperation processes conducted by the Alabama Department of Transportation. Goals Addressed: I, II, III

O. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will encourage the publication of news articles on the transportation planning process. Goals Addressed: I, II, III, V

P. The staff of the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will be available for speaking engagements concerning the transportation planning process. Goals Addressed: I, II, III, IV, V

Q. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will publish the Public Involvement Plan and any amendments to the Plan. The public will be given a 45-day period to provide written comments prior to final document approval. Goals Addressed: I, II, III, IV, V

R. The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will review the Public Involvement Plan at least every five years. Goals Addressed: I, II, IV

Performance Measures

1. What was the attendance percentage of the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee?

Strategy Measured: A

The attendance percentage for the CTAC was 55% (79 out of 144).

2. How many citizens who were not committee members or transportation agency employees attended standing committee meetings? What was the ratio of citizens to members and employees?

Strategy Measured: B

Twenty local citizens attended the MPO standing committee meetings during this fiscal year (16 to 95, 17%).

3. What was the ratio of standing committee meetings to meeting notices provided?

Strategy Measured: C

Twenty-four notices were provided for 24 meetings (24 to 24, 100%).

4. How many standing committee meeting notices were posted in the local newspapers?

Strategy Measured: C

Total standing committee meetings: 33
Total MPO Annual Training Session: 1

5. Was the mailing list updated annually or more frequently?

Strategy Measured: C, D

The list was updated several times throughout the year as people and organizations asked to be removed or added to the list.

6. What was the ratio of requests for special meeting accommodations to special arrangements made, including interpretation service?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO staff did not receive any requests for special meeting accommodations during the year.

7. How many persons with disabilities attended standing committee meetings and the annual training session? What percentage of meeting attendees were persons with disabilities?

Strategy Measured: D

The staff noted no persons with disabilities at any of the standing committee meetings or the annual training session held during the year. No meeting attendees identified themselves as having a disability.

8. Were traditionally underserved groups notified of MPO meetings and events?

Strategy Measured: D

Traditionally underserved groups were notified of every MPO meeting, including standing committees and the MPO training session.

9. Were traditionally underserved groups notified of long-range transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) meetings and events?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO staff notified traditionally underserved groups regarding amendments to the *2020-23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* and the *2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)* during the year.

10. What was the ratio of individuals or groups requesting to be added to the MPO notification list to those added?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO staff added everyone who requested to be added to the MPO notification list (4 to 4).

11. Was anyone denied the ability to participate in an MPO meeting or event? Were any complaints received regarding the denial of participation?

Strategy Measured: D

No one was denied participation at any MPO meeting or event. No complaints were received regarding denial of participation.

12. Were there any complaints regarding ADA violations?

Strategy Measured: D

No ADA complaints were received during the year.

13. What was the ratio of requests to change the MPO process or documents to address traditionally underserved populations to actual change?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO staff did not receive any requests to change the MPO process or documents to address traditionally underserved populations during the year.

14. What was the ratio of requests for interpretation service to service provided?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO staff did not receive any requests for interpretation services during the year.

15. What was the ratio of requests to translate the MPO website or MPO documents to actual translations?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO staff did not receive any requests to translate the MPO website or MPO documents during the year.

16. What was the ratio of requests to make MPO presentations to actual presentations made? How many of the requests were from traditionally underserved people or groups?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO staff made one presentation to an University of Alabama engineering class.

17. At how many community events did the MPO staff distribute MPO materials?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO staff did not distribute MPO materials at a community event during the year.

18. Were the draft long-range transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program available at public places and on the Internet?

Strategy Measured: D

The 2024-2027 draft TIP was available at the WARC office and online. The adopted documents are available on the Internet and at the WARC office.

19. Were comments accepted in person, by mail, by fax, and by electronic means?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO always accepts comments in person, by mail, by fax, and by electronic means.

20. What was the ratio of MPO staff requests to discuss the transportation planning process or documents to actual discussions?

Strategy Measured: D

The MPO staff received 5 requests to discuss the transportation planning process or documents during the year and responded to every request.

21. Were planning agencies and officials notified of MPO meetings and events?

Strategy Measured: E

Planning agencies and officials are included in the MPO meeting and event news release list. They receive notification of all MPO meetings and events.

22. Were planning agencies and officials notified of long-range transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) meetings and events?

Strategy Measured: E

The MPO staff notified planning agencies and officials regarding amendments to the *2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan*.

23. Was a letter sent once a year to planning agencies and officials that described the planning process, listed up-coming MPO meetings, and requested copies of plans, maps, and inventories?

Strategy Measured: E

The MPO staff sends a letter every September to planning agencies and officials that describe the planning process, lists up-coming MPO meetings, and requests copies of plans, maps, and inventories.

24. Was a link to draft Long-Range Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs provided to planning agencies and officials prior to final adoption of plans and programs?

Strategy Measured: E

The 2024-2027 draft TIP was available at the WARC office and online.. The adopted documents are available on the Internet and at the WARC office.

25. Were planning agencies' plans, maps, and inventories compared against the draft Long-Range Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs prior to final adoption?

Strategy Measured: E

The MPO staff requested but did not receive other agencies' plans, maps, and inventories.

26. How many people attended the annual training session?

Strategy Measured: E

There were 33 unique logins, with some logins having multiple viewers.

27. How many complaints regarding the transportation planning process were received?

Strategy Measured: F

The MPO staff received no complaints regarding the transportation planning process during the year.

28. What was the ratio of inquiries or comments to responses?

Strategy Measured: F

The MPO staff did not receive any comments regarding the planning process that required a response.

29. Was the record of public involvement produced?

Strategy Measured: G

The MPO staff produced the *Record of Public Involvement - Fiscal Year 2023* during the year. This document was placed on the WARC website in October 2023.

30. How many documents were produced?

Strategy Measured: H

The MPO staff produced or updated the following seven documents during the year:

- *Record of Public Involvement - Fiscal Year 2022*
- *Authorized Project List 2022*
- *Unified Planning Work Program - Fiscal Year 2024*
- *2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program – Amended*
- *2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program*

- *2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan - Amended*
- *Tuscaloosa County Traffic Counts - 2022*

31. How many documents were available on the web site?

Strategy Measured: H

All of the documents produced during the year were available on the MPO website. The MPO had a total of 15 documents on the website during the year.

32. How many requests for information were received (in-person, by telephone, and by mail)?

Strategy Measured: F

Total requests for information: 22

In-Person requests: 1

Telephone requests: 3

Postal mail requests: 0

Email requests: 18

Sources of Requests

Government agencies / departments: 11

General public: 4

Media: 0

Non-Profit: 2

Businesses: 4

University / Colleges: 1

Churches: 0

33. How many documents were distributed?

Strategy Measured: H

Total documents distributed (Paper copies):

Draft and final versions of the UPWP: 0

Draft and final versions of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan: 0

Distribution List

Government agencies / departments: 0

Local businesses: 0

Local citizen: 0

34. How many hits did the web site of the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization receive?

Strategy Measured: H

MPO Home page Views: 421

MPO Document page Views: 480
MPO Meetings page Views: 284
MPO Title VI page Views: 31

35. Was public notice regarding Transportation Improvement Program and long-range plan development provided? Were there any complaints or requests for change related to the public notice efforts?

Strategy Measured: I

News releases were distributed regarding the *2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* and proposed amendments to the *2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* and the *2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan*. The news releases went to the media, organizations representing traditionally underserved groups, transportation agencies and companies, planning agencies, and interested residents.

No complaints or requests for change were received.

36. Were Transportation Improvement Program and long-range plan draft documents available? Were there any complaints or requests for change related to the availability of these documents?

Strategy Measured: H, I

The draft *2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* were available.

No complaints or requests for change were received.

37. Were public meetings held for the Transportation Improvement Program and the long-range transportation plan prior to adoption? Were there any complaints or requests for change related to the public meetings?

Strategy Measured: J

A public meeting was held for the *2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*

No complaints or requests for change were received.

38. Was notification of the public meetings for the Transportation Improvement Program and the long-range transportation plan provided at least two weeks prior to the meetings? Were there any complaints or requests for change related to the public meetings notification?

Strategy Measured: I

Yes, notification was given at least two weeks prior to the public meeting for the *2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*.

No complaints or requests for change were received.

39. Were the Transportation Improvement Program and the long-range transportation plan public meetings held at convenient times and accessible locations? Were there any complaints or requests for change related to the time or location of the public meetings?

Strategy Measured: J

Yes, the public meeting for the *2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* was convenient times and accessible locations

No complaints or requests for change were received.

40. If the Transportation Improvement Program and the long-range transportation plan varied significantly from the version that was initially available for public comment, was an additional public meeting held? Were there any complaints or requests for change related to the public meetings?

Strategy Measured: K

The *2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* did not vary significantly from the version that was initially available for public comment.

No complaints or requests for change were received.

41. Were visualization techniques used to describe the Transportation Improvement Program and the long-range transportation plan? Were there any complaints or requests for change related to the visualization techniques?

Strategy Measured: L

The *2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* had many visualization components.

No complaints or requests for change were received.

42. Were Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) public involvement activities coordinated with the Alabama Department of Transportation planning and cooperation processes? Were there any complaints or requests for change related to the coordination efforts?

Strategy Measured: M

The MPO staff helped the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) notify local elected officials, including MPO officials and local special interest groups, about public involvement activities conducted by ALDOT. No complaints or requests for change related to coordination efforts were received.

43. How many newspaper articles were published on the transportation planning process in the local newspapers?

Strategy Measured: N

There were no articles published on the transportation planning process in the local newspapers. For the year, 34 MPO meeting notices were published in the local newspapers.

44. How many speeches or presentations did the staff provide?

Strategy Measured: O

The staff made one presentation to a University of Alabama engineering class.

45. Was the Public Involvement Plan produced / updated?

Strategy Measured: P

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was updated in fiscal year 2023. The PIP will be updated again in 2028.

46. Did the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization provide 45 days for public comment prior to adopting the Public Involvement Plan or any amendments?

Strategy Measured: P

The MPO provided more than 45 days for public comment prior to adopting the Public Involvement Plan.

47. How frequently was the Public Involvement Plan reviewed?

Strategy Measured: Q

The Public Involvement Plan is reviewed every year and is updated at least every five years.