

DRAFT

West Alabama Rural Planning Organization

Work Program

Fiscal Year 2024

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024



Developed by the West Alabama Regional Commission
in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation

Adopted August 11, 2023

West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO)

Work Program Fiscal Year 2024

This document is posted at
<https://www.warc.info/rpo-documents>

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Date adopted: August 11, 2023

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This Work Program was financed in part by the US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Alabama Department of Transportation, and local governments, and prepared for the RPO by the West Alabama Regional Commission, in partial fulfillment of Task 1 of the RPO Work Program - Fiscal Year 2022 and requirements set forth in 23 USC 134 and 135 (as amended by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Sections 11201, November 2021)

West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Members

Policy Committee

Voting

Rodney Stabler, Bibb County Commission Representative
Mike Freeman, Fayette County Commission Representative
Tennyson Smith, Greene County Commission Representative
Arthur Crawford, Hale County Commission Representative
Jeff Long, Lamar County Commission Representative
Jill Noland, Pickens County Commission Representative
Wallace McAdory, West Central Region Engineer, Alabama Department of Transportation
Dennis Stripling, Executive Director, West Alabama Regional Commission
Bobbie White, Bibb County Mayors Representative
Rod Northam, Fayette County Mayors Representative
Latasha Johnson, Greene County Mayors Representative
Jonathan Rossell, Hale County Mayors Representative
Stanley Allred, Lamar County Mayors Representative
Craig Patterson, Pickens County Mayors Representative

Non-Voting

Mark D. Bartlett, Federal Highway Administration
Bradley B. Lindsey, P.E., State Local Transportation Engineer, ALDOT
Debbie Handley, Technical Coordinating Committee Chairman
Al Elbert, Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee Chairman
John Hinton, Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Chairman

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

Voting

Jeff McKinney, Bibb County Engineer
Jarrod Milligan, Fayette County Engineer
Willie Branch, Greene County Engineer
Fred Powell, Hale County Engineer
Matthew Rouse, Lamar County Engineer
Clint Terry, Pickens County Engineer
Brad Darden, ALDOT West Central Region Pre-Construction Engineer
Robert B. Dees, ALDOT Bureau of Local Transportation
Debbie Handley, Fayette and Lamar County Transit Provider
Bobby Armstead, Greene and Hale County Transit Provider
Patricia McCafferty, Pickens County Transit Provider
Shannon Taylor, Airport Representative
Vontra Giles, Federal Highway Administration
Railroad Representative
George Newman, Trucking Representative
Representative, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Representative
Zane Davis, West Alabama Regional Commission

Non-Voting

Representative from each municipality in the study area
Scott Anders, Tuscaloosa County Engineer
Fayette City Engineer
Russell Lawrence, Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority
Brian Latham, District 51 (Fayette/Lamar) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region
Jonathan Anderson, District 53 (Pickens/Greene) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region
Sky Hallmon District 54 (Bibb/Chilton) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region
Talbert Essary, District 55 (Hale/Perry) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region
Chris Bedwell, District 56 (Greene/Sumter) Engineer, ALDOT West Central Region

West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Members (Continued)

Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)

Bibb County

County Appointments

Phil Cottingham

Joanne Craighead

Municipal Appointments

Jerry C. Pow

Tracy Sanders

Fayette County

County Appointments

Allen Dunavant

Willie Ivey

Municipal Appointments

Wanda Deavours

Bobbie Kemp-Driver

Greene County

County Appointments

Philis Belcher

Judy Jarvis

Municipal Appointments

Julia D. Fuller

Iris Sermon

Hale County

County Appointments

Mason Dyess

Tony Lee

Municipal Appointments

Jerry Elkins

Austin Long

Lamar County

County Appointments

Wayne Baines

Al Elbert

Municipal Appointments

Wayne Christian

Lane Gilliam

Pickens County

County Appointments

Brandon Garrison

Ben Curry

Municipal Appointments

Marva Gipson

Rusty Tate

Prepared by the
West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC)
Staff to the RPO

West Alabama Rural Planning Organization

Resolution RPO 2023-1

**Adopting the
West Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Work Program - Fiscal Year 2024**

WHEREAS, the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) was established to serve as the decision-making body and to provide guidance to local governments in conducting the non-metropolitan cooperative planning process, in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation, for Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, and Pickens Counties in Alabama, as established in 23 USC 134 and 135 (amended by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, November 2021).

WHEREAS, the RPO is interested in the continued development of the non-metropolitan cooperative transportation planning process as described in 23 CFR 450.210(b) through on-going public involvement and data collection of the rural transportation needs and issues of the citizens in the aforementioned counties; and

WHEREAS, the West Alabama Regional Commission, serving as staff to the RPO, is required to provide guidance to local governments in conducting the non-metropolitan planning process as a cooperative effort with the Alabama Department of Transportation as established in the Guidelines for Operation, May 2021; and

WHEREAS, the West Alabama Regional Commission has prepared the Work Program - Fiscal Year 2024 outlining the tasks necessary to accomplish the goals of the cooperative planning process and the Rural Planning Organization; and

WHEREAS, the Work Program has been duly reviewed, discussed, and approved by the RPO; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, this **11th day of August 2023** that the West Alabama RPO does hereby adopt and endorse the Work Program - Fiscal Year 2024 as the guide for tasks to be completed for the cooperative planning process.

RPO Chairman

Attest:

RPO Process Coordinator

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the work that will be performed by the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (WARPO) in fiscal year 2024. The West Alabama Rural Planning Organization was organized to conduct a rural transportation planning process in six west Alabama counties (Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, and Pickens). The WARPO serves as the nonmetropolitan local-official cooperative process for the Alabama Department of Transportation in west Alabama.

The laws requiring Departments of Transportation to develop nonmetropolitan cooperative processes are found in Title 23, U.S. Code (USC) 135 and 505, as amended by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Sections 11201, November 2021). Sections 1202 and 3016 describe Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Programing and the related funding features, respectively. The actions are duplicated for public transit in Title 49, U.S. Code Sections 5303-5306, and the formula funding features are in Section 5323. The rules regarding the nonmetropolitan process are published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) as Title 23 Part 450.

Agency Participation

This Work Program was developed by the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization. A description of the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) can be found in Appendix A of this document. The RPO is a cooperative effort of the West Alabama Regional Commission, Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the six rural counties of west Alabama and the 30 municipalities in these counties. Each of these entities has representation on the various RPO committees. The staff of the RPO is housed at the West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC).

Development Process

With input from ALDOT, the staff of the RPO developed a draft Work Program during the spring of 2023. The draft was presented to the RPO committees for their review in April and May 2023. The RPO Policy Committee adopted the draft Work Program on May 5, 2023. At this point, the draft was presented to ALDOT (reviewing agency) and was placed on the WARC website for public review. No comments or requests for changes were received from the public. The draft Work Program was reviewed again by the RPO committees in July and August 2023. The Policy Committee adopted the final Work Program on August 11, 2023.

Public Involvement

The public had an opportunity to provide input in the development of the Work Program during the April/May and July/August 2023 RPO committee meetings. The public is encouraged to participate in discussions held at the committee meetings. News releases providing the meeting details and agenda are distributed at least two weeks prior to the committee meetings. The news releases are sent to the local media, special

interest groups, and interested individuals. The meeting schedule and agenda are also posted on the WARC website.

Title VI Activities

The RPO operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with the RPO. More information on the RPO Title VI program can be found on the RPO website (<http://warc.info/transportation-planning/west-alabama-rpo>). Task 4.2 of this work program describes the Title VI activities the RPO will conduct.

The RPO makes every effort to provide an inclusive planning program and adheres to and complies with all Title VI programs, processes, and procedures, that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)*
- Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*
- *Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC 2000d*
- Title 23 U.S.C. Section 324 (Prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex)
- Executive Order 12898 *Federal Actions To Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994*
- Title 42 U.S.C. Section 6101-6107 *Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Older American Act)*
- Title 49 U.S.C. Section 5332 Nondiscrimination
- 49 C.F.R. 26 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
- 23 C.F.R. 230 Equal Employment Opportunity

The RPO adopted public involvement plan includes ADA, Title VI, and limited English proficiency elements. The transportation planning process complies with the *FTA Title VI Circular 4702.1B* (October 2012). Anyone with disabilities or limited English capabilities may request special assistance to participate in the transportation planning process.

Scope of the Planning Process (Special Planning Considerations)

In developing the Work Program, the RPO was required to consider the current surface transportation authorizing legislation, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). Under the FAST Act, RPOs must consider projects and strategies that will:

- A. support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- B. increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
- C. increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
- D. increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;

- E. protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- F. enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- G. promote efficient system management and operation;
- H. emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- I. improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- J. enhance travel and tourism.

Planning Emphasis Areas

On December 30, 2021 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) for MPOs and state Departments of Transportation. MPOs are expected to include work items in the UPWPs that address the PEAs. The PEAs and the corresponding UPWP tasks are listed below.

- Tackling the Climate Crisis – Transition to a Clean Energy, Resilient Future
 - Work items included in Tasks 1.1, 2.2, 3.1, and 5.1
- Equity and Justice40 in Transportation Planning
 - Work items included in Tasks 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, and 4.2
- Complete Streets
 - Work items included in Tasks 1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4
- Public Involvement
 - Work items included in Tasks 1.1, 3.1, and 4.1
- Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)/U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Coordination
 - Work items included in Tasks 1.1, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.5
- Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) Coordination
 - Work items included in Tasks 1.1, 3.1, and 3.5
- Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL)
 - Work items included in Tasks 1.1, 2.2, 3.1, and 5.1
- Data in Transportation Planning
 - Work items included in Tasks 1.1, 2.1, and 2.2

The RPO prepared the Work Program based on these factors, which are considered in every document and program produced by the RPO.

Overview of RPO Planning Activities

The RPO produces two main documents; a Work Program and a long-range transportation plan (LRTP). The Work Program is prepared annually, and the LRTP is updated every five years. Other documents developed as part of the transportation planning process include the public involvement plan and the coordinated public transit plan. The table below lists the current and projected adoption dates for the RPO documents.

RPO Documents	Update Cycle (Years)	Current Adoption Date	Projected Adoption Date
Work Program	1	August 12, 2022	Summer 2023
Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	5	August 13, 2021	Summer 2026
Public Involvement Plan (PIP)	5	February 14, 2020	Spring 2025
Coordinated Public Transit Plan	5	August 9, 2019	Spring 2024

Format

The Work Program is divided into four tasks. The tasks outline the transportation planning work performed by the RPO staff at the West Alabama Regional Commission and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). The description of each task includes a purpose, an objective, goals, previous work, proposed work, products, staffing, schedule, and financial responsibility. Appendix A describes the RPO organization, Appendix B summarizes the Work Program budget, and Appendix C includes a transportation planning acronym and terms list.

Tasks

1 - General Administration

Purpose, Goal, and Objectives

The purpose of this task is to manage the transportation planning process. The goal is to have an effective and efficient transportation planning process. The objectives of this task are to:

1. Complete the administrative requirements of the RPO
2. Complete the financial management requirements of the RPO
3. Prepare and update required documentation to meet State and Federal requirements
4. Ensure plans, programs, and processes developed by the RPO consider the needs of the traditionally underserved populations (low-income, minority, disabled, and elderly) and adhere to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
5. Ensure federally funded transportation projects in west Alabama do not disproportionately affect the traditionally underserved populations and that these populations are not denied the benefits of the projects
6. Conduct Rural Planning Organization Policy Committee and Technical Coordinating Committee meetings
7. Provide the general public, businesses, organizations, and the RPO committees with transportation planning related information and technical assistance
8. Effectively consult with the appropriate agencies regarding transportation planning efforts
9. Determine reasonable financial requirements and limitations for the transportation planning process
10. Keep the current transportation planning process budget in balance
11. Provide the RPO staff time to learn new techniques, learn new software, and maintain an understanding of the laws and regulations governing the RPO
12. Provide the tools necessary for the RPO staff to develop technical proficiency
13. Provide the opportunity and means to travel to useful workshops and conferences
14. Reimburse the RPO staff for travel expenses
15. Determine appropriate equipment needs and make necessary purchases
16. Obtain the best price on purchases, repairs, and upgrades
17. Manage/maintain current equipment, supplies, computer hardware, software, and furnishings to minimize expenditures

Proposed Work

1. WARC Board Meetings - The RPO staff will attend WARC Board of Directors Meetings (3/2024, 6/2024, 9/2024). The RPO staff will attend the WARC Board of Directors Annual Meeting (11/2023).
2. WARC Staff Meetings - The RPO staff will attend WARC Staff Meetings.

3. RPO Staff Meetings - The RPO staff will conduct monthly staff meetings.
4. RPO Staff Assignment Schedule - The RPO staff will update the staff assignment schedule.
5. Employee Evaluations - The Transportation Planning Director will prepare annual employee evaluations.
6. Monthly Reports - The RPO staff will prepare monthly RPO progress reports.
7. Annual Reports - The RPO staff will prepare an annual progress report for ALDOT in October 2023.
8. Summary Document Update - The RPO staff will update the RPO *Summary Document* in February 2024.
9. Invoicing - The RPO staff will prepare and submit monthly invoices to ALDOT.
10. Monthly Financial Review - The RPO staff will review the WARC monthly financial statement.
11. Annual Audit Assistance and Review - The RPO staff will provide information to the WARC auditors and review the draft and final audit report.
12. Policy Committee and TCC Administration - The RPO staff will conduct four RPO Policy Committee meetings (11/2023, 2/2024, 5/2024, 8/2024). The RPO staff will conduct four TCC meetings (11/2023, 2/2024, 5/2024, 8/2024). The RPO staff will prepare the agendas, notices, and minutes for these meetings. The RPO staff will prepare Policy Committee resolutions. The RPO staff will prepare TCC recommendation lists. The RPO staff will prepare four TCC project status reports.
13. Meeting Schedule - The RPO staff will prepare the RPO committees meeting schedule for fiscal year 2025.
14. Transportation-Related Meeting Attendance/Participation - The RPO staff will attend meetings with interested groups. The RPO staff will make transportation planning presentations by request.
15. Information and Technical Assistance - The RPO staff will provide transportation planning information and technical assistance to individuals, businesses, organizations, and RPO committee members.
16. Consultation - The RPO staff will consult with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the local governments regarding transportation planning efforts.
17. Budget - The RPO staff will prepare a budget for the Fiscal Year 2025 Work Program based on input from ALDOT and the local governments.
18. Public Participation - The RPO staff will post the draft Work Program on the WARC website. The RPO staff will distribute paper and digital copies of the draft Work Program upon request.
19. Fiscal Year 2025 Work Program - The RPO staff will prepare the *Fiscal Year 2025 Work Program*. The draft will be distributed for review in April and May 2024. The final Work Program will be adopted in August 2024.
20. Fiscal Year 2024 Work Program Budget - The RPO staff will monitor the *Fiscal Year 2024 Work Program* budget and amend, if necessary.
21. Read/Study Appropriate Publications - The RPO staff will read transportation planning related publications on a monthly basis. The RPO staff will review/study federal regulations and circulars.

22. Study GIS Software Programs - The RPO staff will study GIS programs.
23. Attended Workshops, Conferences, and Webinars - The RPO staff will participate in ALDOT-approved workshops, conferences, and webinars as needed. Out-of-state travel will be approved by ALDOT.
24. Travel Vouchers - The RPO staff will complete travel vouchers for travel reimbursement.
25. Purchase, Repair, or Replace Equipment and Supplies - The RPO staff will purchase necessary supplies that cannot be charged to the WARC indirect fund. These purchases will be processed as needed.
26. Meals for the RPO Policy Committee Meetings - The RPO staff will purchase meals for the RPO Policy Committee meetings.
27. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Grant Application Review - The RPO staff will review Section 5310 and 5311 grant applications and provide certification related to the federally required transit coordination plan.
28. Technical Assistance - The RPO staff will provide technical assistance to groups that work with low-income people, minorities, persons with disabilities, and elderly citizens, as requested.
29. Title VI Compliance - The RPO staff will manage the RPO Title VI program including the language assistance provisions of the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan.
30. Local Government ADA Plan Coordination - As needed, the RPO staff will coordinate ADA transition plan activities between the local governments, ALDOT, and FHWA.

Products

1. RPO Staff Assignment Schedule - October 2023
2. Employee Evaluations - Summer 2023
3. Monthly Progress Reports - First week of every month
4. Annual Report - October 2023
5. RPO Summary Document - February 2024
6. Monthly Invoices - First week of every month
7. Annual Audit - Summer 2024
8. Policy Committee Agendas, Notices, Resolutions, and Minutes - November 2023, February 2024, May 2024, and August 2024
9. TCC Agendas, Notices, Recommendation Lists, Project Status Reports, Minutes - November 2023, February 2024, May 2024, and August 2024
10. RPO Committee Meeting Schedule for 2025 - Summer 2024
11. Technical Assistance - As needed
12. Fiscal Year 2025 Work Program - May 2024 (Draft), August 2024 (Final)
13. Amended Fiscal Year 2024 Work Program Budget - As needed
14. Workshops and Conferences - The RPO staff will attend workshops, conferences, and webinars throughout the year. However, these are generally not scheduled far enough in advance to list the programs or dates at this time.
15. New, Repaired, or Replaced Equipment and Supplies - As needed
16. Meals for the RPO Policy Committee Meetings - (November 2023, February 2024, May 2024, and August 2024)

- 17. FTA Grant Application Reviews - Spring/Summer 2024
- 18. Title VI Compliance Tracking - As needed
- 19. Language Assistance - As needed

Staffing

West Alabama Regional Commission (RPO Staff)

Schedule

The work items in this task will be conducted throughout fiscal year (10/01/23 - 09/30/24). If applicable, estimated completion dates are listed under the Products section.

The preparation of the *Fiscal Year 2025 Work Program* is expected to begin in March 2024 and end in August 2024. A draft document is scheduled to be complete by May 2024, and the final document is expected to be complete by August 2024.

Financial Responsibility

Total	\$36,250
State Planning and Research (SPR) - Federal Funds	\$29,000
West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC) - Local Match	\$7,250

2 - Data Collection and Analysis

Purpose, Goal, and Objectives

The purpose of this task is to collect and maintain socioeconomic and environmental data used for the RPO transportation planning activities. The goal is to have accurate and up-to-date data necessary to revise the long-range transportation plan and conduct the transportation planning process. The objectives of the task are to:

1. Accurate and current socioeconomic and environmental data
2. Accurate and useful transportation safety data
3. Accurately map the traditionally underserved populations
4. Maintain data in digital formats, including GIS files
5. Ensure that the RPO committee and staff have the necessary socioeconomic and environmental data to make informed decisions

Proposed Work

1. Collect Data - The RPO staff will collect natural and manmade environmental data (land use, accident locations, bridges, cemeteries, churches, major employers, government facilities, historic sites, archeological areas, parks, schools, shopping centers, medical facilities, strip mines, methane wells, hazardous waste sites, underground storage tanks, landfills).
2. Maintain Files/Databases - The RPO staff will update digital files, including GIS files.
3. Produce Maps - The RPO staff will produce maps of various social and environmental files.
4. Census Data - Census data will be collected, summarized, and distributed by the RPO staff.
5. Business/Employment - Business and Employment information will be gathered and maintained by the RPO staff.
6. Traffic Counts - Traffic counts, provided by ALDOT, will be transferred by the RPO staff into digital files, including GIS files. Six traffic count brochures will be prepared by the RPO staff.
7. Crash Report - The RPO staff will prepare a report of high traffic crash locations for the RPO committees in November 2023. (Based on the ALDOT Legal Department interpretation of 23 USC §409 and Alabama Law, this report is for internal use only and will not be provided to the general public for any reason.)
8. Safety Observation Report - The RPO staff will prepare a report composed of safety observations from the RPO committees. The report will be updated after every set of RPO committee meetings (November 2023, February 2024, May 2024, and August 2024). The reports will be provided to the appropriate state and local offices.
9. Annual Safety Observation Summary Report - The RPO staff will prepare a summary of the safety observations compiled throughout the fiscal year in September 2024.
10. Map Underserved Populations - The RPO staff will update maps for low-income, minority, disabled, and elderly population as possible.

Products

1. Natural and Manmade Environmental Data Files - As data becomes available
2. Natural and Manmade Environmental Data Maps - As needed
3. Census Data Files - Updated as data becomes available
4. Business and Employment Files - Updated as data becomes available
5. Traffic Count Files - Summer 2024
6. Traffic Online Map Update - Summer 2024
7. Crash Report - November 2023 (Based on the ALDOT Legal Department interpretation of 23 USC §409 and Alabama Law, this report is for internal use only and will not be provided to the general public for any reason.)
8. Safety Observation Report - November 2023, February 2024, May 2024, and August 2024
9. Annual Safety Observation Summary Report - September 2024
10. Maps of Underserved Populations - As needed

Staffing

West Alabama Regional Commission (RPO Staff)

Schedule

The work items in this task will be conducted throughout fiscal year (10/01/23 - 09/30/24). If applicable, estimated completion dates are listed under the Products section.

Financial Responsibility

Total	\$20,000
State Planning and Research (SPR) - Federal Funds	\$16,000
West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC) - Local Match	\$4,000

3 - Transportation System Planning

Purpose, Goal, and Objectives

The purpose of this task is to develop plans for the transportation system. The goal is to create documents that address the needs of the community, cover all modes of travel, and improve the safety of the system. The objectives of the task are to:

1. Monitor transportation needs
2. Monitor the progress of transportation projects
3. Develop reasonable strategies to address transportation needs
4. Prepare easily understood plans
5. Amend the plans based on current transportation needs

Proposed Work

1. Plan and Program Amendments - The RPO staff will amend plans and programs with RPO adopted amendments based on identified transportation needs.
2. West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan (2024) - The RPO staff will prepare the transit plan in conjunction with the Tuscaloosa Area MPO.

Products

1. Up-to-date plans - Plans will be amended, as necessary.
2. West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan (2024) - Draft February 2024 and Final May 2024

Staffing

West Alabama Regional Commission (RPO Staff)

Schedule

The work items in this task will be conducted throughout fiscal year (10/01/23 - 09/30/24). If applicable, estimated completion dates are listed under the Products section.

The draft *Long-Range Transportation Plan 2026* is expected to be complete by May 2026 and the final document is scheduled to be complete by August 2026.

The draft *West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan (2024)* should be approved by the end of February 2024. The final plan should be adopted by the end of May 2024.

Financial Responsibility

Total	\$10,000
State Planning and Research (SPR) - Federal Funds	\$8,000
West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC) - Local Match	\$2,000

Note: ALDOT is not required to adopt, fund, or implement projects resulting from the rural cooperative process. Projects in an RPO LRTP or TIP are advisory to ALDOT only.

4 - Public Involvement

Purpose, Goal, and Objectives

The purpose of this task is to develop and manage the public involvement process. The goal is to have an open transportation planning process that considers the needs of all segments of the local population. The objectives of this task are to:

1. Have a proactive public involvement process
2. Provide timely and adequate public notice of RPO activities
3. Provide full public access to key decisions in the RPO planning process
4. Provide early and continuing public involvement in the RPO planning process
5. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy input used to develop plans and programs
6. Ensure that everyone, including low-income individuals, minorities, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens have an opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process
7. Conduct Rural Planning Organization Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) meetings
8. Maintain a viable Public Involvement Plan (PIP)
9. Maintain a Record of Public Involvement (RPI)

Proposed Work

1. Public Notification - The RPO staff will provide news releases regarding RPO meetings and events to media contacts, interested public agencies, and groups that work with low-income people, minorities, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens. The news releases will be provided by postal mail and electronic mail. In addition, the news releases will be posted on the WARC website and the WARC Meeting Bulletin Board. The news releases will be distributed no later than two weeks prior to meeting dates.
2. Public Presentations - The RPO staff will speak at public and civic groups during the fiscal year, upon request.
3. Mailing Lists Maintenance - The RPO staff will maintain mailing lists of media contacts, interested public agencies, and groups that deal with low-income people, minorities, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens. The RPO staff will maintain two lists, a postal mail list, and an electronic mail list.
4. Document Distribution - The RPO staff will distribute RPO documents to committee members, government agencies, and the general public. The RPO staff will post the RPO documents on the WARC website.
5. PIP Annual Performance Review - The RPO staff will calculate the performance measures of the PIP for fiscal year 2023 in October 2023.
6. CTAC Administration - The RPO staff will conduct four sets of CTAC meetings (November 2023, January 2024, April 2024, and July 2024). The staff will prepare the agendas, notices, and minutes for these meetings. The RPO staff will prepare CTAC recommendation lists.

7. RPO Response - The RPO staff will provide written responses to inquiries into the transportation planning process or an RPO document in fiscal year 2024, as needed.
8. Record of Public Involvement (RPI) - The RPO staff will prepare the final RPI for fiscal year 2023 in October 2023. The RPO staff will compile the initial RPI for fiscal year 2024 over the course of the year.
9. State Planning Assistance – The RPO will assist ALDOT with various transportation planning documents and activities.

Products

1. News Releases (RPO Committee Meetings) - October 2023, January 2024, April 2024, and July 2024
2. Public Presentations - As requested
3. Mailing Lists - Updated as needed
4. CTAC Meetings - November 2023, January 2024, April 2024, and July 2024
5. RPO Written Responses - As required
6. Record of Public Involvement - October 2023

Staffing

West Alabama Regional Commission (RPO Staff)

Schedule

The work items in this task will be conducted throughout fiscal year (10/01/23 - 09/30/24). If applicable, estimated completion dates are listed under the Products section.

The draft *Public Involvement Plan (PIP) 2025* should be approved by November 2024. The final PIP should be adopted by the end of February 2025.

Financial Responsibility

Total	\$15,000
State Planning and Research (SPR) - Federal Funds	\$12,000
West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC) - Local Match	\$3,000

Appendix A

RPO Description

Introduction

The following is a summary of the West Alabama Rural Transportation Planning Process and includes some background information. A Rural Planning Organization (RPO) functions somewhat like a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and provides structure for the process. An important distinction between an MPO and the RPO is that all RPO recommendations and documents are only advisory at this time. The RPO serves as a formal link between the ALDOT and local governments and provides additional opportunities for the rural areas to communicate with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT).

Organization

The West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) is composed of three committees. The Policy Committee is the official decision-making body of the process. The Policy Committee is served by two advisory committees, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC).

Study Area

The study area includes the six rural counties served by the West Alabama Regional Commission: Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, and Pickens. Tuscaloosa is not part of the study area because it is served by a transportation planning process governed by the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Tuscaloosa County MPO has nonvoting representatives on the RPO Policy and TCC. Figure 1 depicts the study area.

Agreement

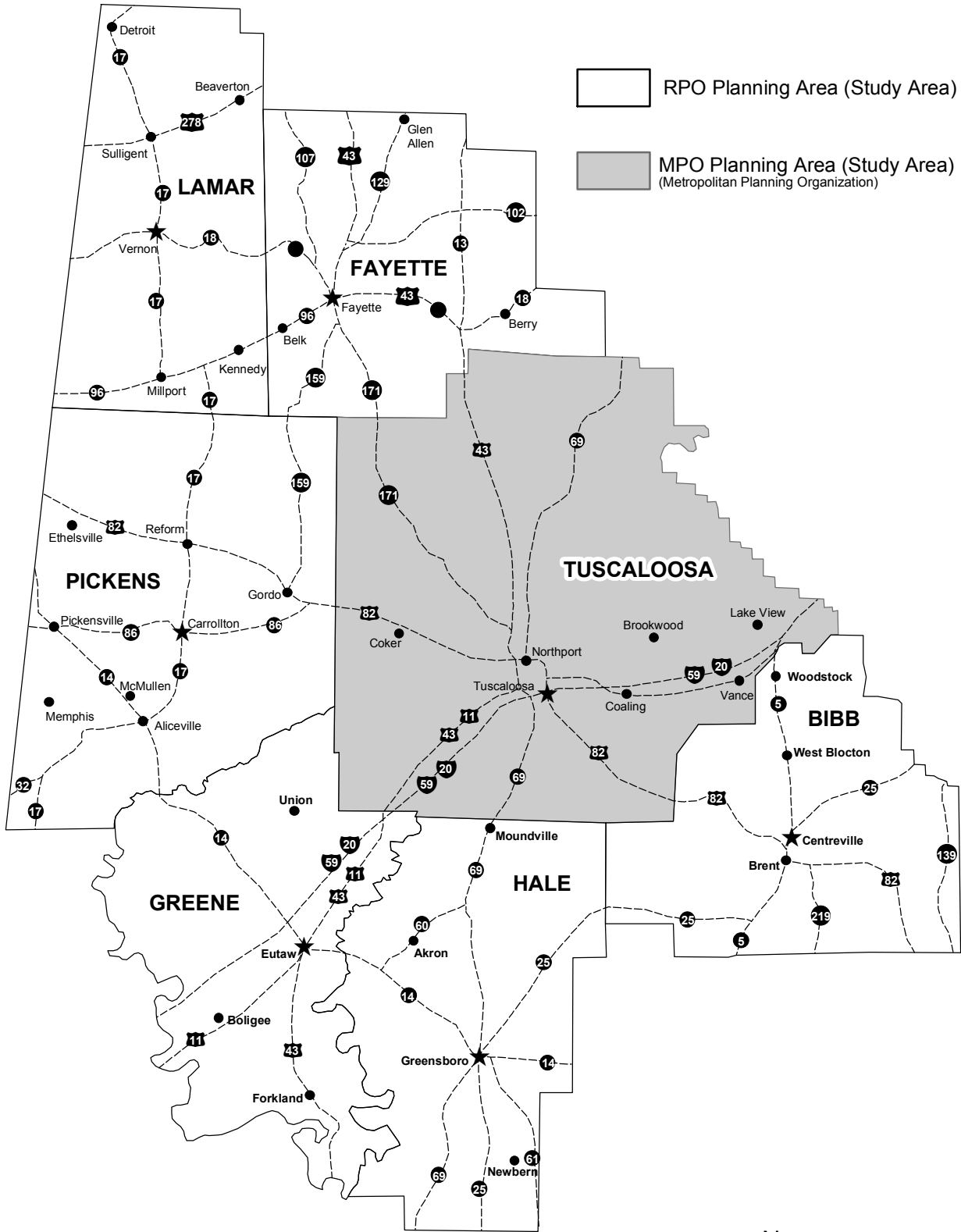
The agreement legally delineates the concerned governmental entities, defines the duties of each entity, and outlines the organizational structure. The agreement is between the West Alabama Regional Commission and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT).

Laws and Regulations

The laws requiring Departments of Transportation to develop nonmetropolitan cooperative processes are found in Title 23, U.S. Code (USC) 135 and 505. Title 23 was amended by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Sections 11201, November 2021. The actions are duplicated for public transit in Title 49, U.S. Code Sections 5304, and the formula funding features are in 5338.

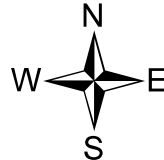
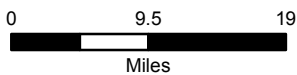
The rules regarding the nonmetropolitan cooperative process are published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) as Title 23, Part 450. The Code was superseded or amended by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Sections 1202 and 20006, July 2012, and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) Section 1202, December 2015, and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Sections 11201, November 2021. These regulations require States to consider the concerns of local elected officials when carrying out statewide transportation planning, to develop a process to cooperate with nonmetropolitan local officials regarding transportation issues and to work with nonmetropolitan officials when developing the statewide transportation plan and the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP).

West Alabama Rural Planning Organization Planning Area



RPO Planning Area (Study Area)

MPO Planning Area (Study Area)
(Metropolitan Planning Organization)



Products of the Transportation Planning Process

Work Program

The Work Program (WP) represents the budget and tasks necessary to accomplish and maintain the transportation planning process within the study area. The WP is developed to coordinate transportation and related planning activities for a cooperative, continuing, and comprehensive planning process. The primary objective of the WP is the development of an integrated planning program that considers the planning activities of each modal group and coordinates these activities to produce a transportation plan that serves all segments of the population.

Safety Program

The RPO collects a list of safety observations at the quarterly committee meetings. In general, the safety observations are low-cost projects that have the potential to reduce traffic crashes. The observations are forwarded to the county engineers, the ALDOT West Central Region District Engineers, the ALDOT West Central Region Engineer, and other relevant agencies. At the end of each fiscal year, the quarterly safety observations are compiled into a final report. The final report describes any action taken to address the suggestion. The report is also provided to the appropriate departments and agencies.

Long-Range Transportation Plan

The RPO adopted the original long-range transportation plan in 2006 and revised it in 2011 and 2016 and 2021. The plan established goals, strategies, and a region-wide transportation vision. The plan includes a prioritized project list for each county and a prioritized list of regional projects. The purpose of the plan is to document the long-range transportation needs of West Alabama, as identified by the elected and appointed officials in the area. The plan is intended to help local governments address and prioritize transportation needs. The plan should also help ALDOT develop the statewide plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and schedule the construction of transportation projects based on their its budget. However, the plan is strictly advisory. No funds have been set aside to undertake any of the strategies or projects included in the plan.

Rural Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) allows state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) to develop a Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) has chosen not to re-designate the current Alabama RPOs as RTPOs. However, ALDOT has decided to allow the RPOs to develop nonbinding Rural TIPs.

Committees

The West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) manages the West Alabama Rural Transportation Planning Process. The RPO is composed of three committees. The Policy Committee is the official decision-making body of the process. The Policy Committee is served by two advisory committees, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC). These committees meet four times a year; January/February, April/May, July/August, and have one Combined Committee meeting in November.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee serves as the official decision-making body for the West Alabama Rural Transportation Planning Process. In this capacity, the Policy Committee determines the content of documents and recommendations provided to the Alabama Department of Transportation. The responsibilities of the Policy Committee include providing overall guidance to the planning process, review and approval of all process plans and programs, and appointing TCC and CTAC members.

The Policy Committee is composed of nineteen members, fourteen voting and five nonvoting. Each county commission in the six rural west Alabama counties has a voting representative on the Policy Committee. In addition, the mayors from each rural county choose a voting representative to serve on the Policy Committee. The ALDOT West Central Region Engineer and the Executive Director of the WARC are the other two voting members. The five nonvoting members are Federal Highway Administration Division Administrator, the ALDOT Local Transportation Engineer, the chairman of the RPO TCC, the chairman of the RPO CTAC, and the chairman of the Tuscaloosa Area MPO Policy Committee.

Technical Coordinating Committee

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) provides technical support to the Policy Committee. The TCC reviews RPO documents, studies, reports, plans, and programs and provides the Policy Committee with recommendations concerning these items. The TCC members evaluate the planning process products from a technical perspective, making sure that all relevant concerns are addressed, including local planning issues, engineering details, environmental questions, and future growth, among many others.

The TCC coordinates the work of the various departments and agencies involved in the transportation planning process. The local governments, the State DOT, and selected other transportation interests are represented on the TCC. The TCC members share information and data that builds and improves the planning processes and products.

Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee

The Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) is made up of twenty-four citizens from the West Alabama area. The county commission and the mayoral representatives on the Policy Committee each appoint two members to the CTAC. Each county has four representatives on the CTAC.

The CTAC was established to provide active public participation in the transportation planning process. The CTAC provides the RPO with a standing committee of citizens who have a good knowledge of the planning process and can pass on public concerns related to transportation in a structured fashion. The CTAC reviews RPO documents, studies, reports, plans, and

programs and provides the Policy Committee with recommendations concerning these items. The CTAC also informs the Policy Committee of public concerns related to transportation projects and issues.

The CTAC is scheduled to meet four times a year. The full CTAC meets once a year, usually in the first quarter of the fiscal year, in conjunction with the TCC and Policy committees. For the other three meetings, the CTAC holds six subcommittee meetings in each of the rural counties. Each subcommittee is composed of the four representatives from the respective county. This method of meeting provides local residents a better opportunity to participate in the planning process.

The CTAC is just one of the strategies included in the public involvement plan adopted by the RPO. The plan describes the RPO public participation goals and lists strategies to encourage public participation in the transportation planning process. The RPO staff reviews participation performance measures annually to judge the effectiveness of the plan.

Appendix B

Budget Summary Table

West Alabama Rural Planning Organization
Work Program Budget
Fiscal Year 2024

Task	SPR Funds	WARC Funds	Total Funds
1.0 General Administration	\$29,000	\$7,250	\$36,250
2.0 Data Collection and Analysis	\$16,000	\$4,000	\$20,000
3.0 Transportation System Planning	\$8,000	\$2,000	\$10,000
4.0 Public Involvement	\$12,000	\$3,000	\$15,000
TOTAL	\$65,000	\$16,250	\$81,250

SPR = State Planning and Research Funds
WARC = West Alabama Regional Commission

Appendix C

Transportation Planning Acronyms and Terms

Transportation Planning Acronyms and Terms

5th Division - Alabama Department of Transportation 5th Division, office located in Tuscaloosa, includes nine counties in West Alabama, Replaced with West Central Region in 2014

AAA - Area Agency on Aging, West Alabama AAA

AADT - Average Annual Daily Traffic count

ACS - American Community Survey; U.S. Census Bureau product; replacement for the decennial long-form data

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act

ADAP - Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program

ADT - Average Daily Traffic count

ALDOT - Alabama Department of Transportation

ARC - Appalachian Regional Commission

ARC - Formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens, now known as The Arc

Bicycle / Pedestrian Scale Development - Development that consists of a mix of land uses (residential, commercial, public) in close proximity, where one could comfortably walk or ride a bicycle from their origin (e.g., residence, place of employment) to a destination (e.g., place of employment, store, government facility, park)

BPC - Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

BR - Bridge funding program; also BRON

CA - Capital funds (transit)

CAC - Citizens Advisory Committee; now known as CTAC

Capacity Project - (Road) a project that adds through lanes to an existing road or builds a new road; (Transit) a project that adds new routes or expands demand response/para-transit fleet

CFR - Code of Federal Regulations

CN - Construction - the final phase of a transportation project, the actual building of the project

CTAC - Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee

DOT - Department of Transportation

DPI or DPIP - Innovative/Special funding program, applies to projects specifically named in federal legislation

EPA - Environmental Protection Agency

ESWA - Easter Seals West Alabama

FAST Act - Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (PL 114-94)

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration

FOCUS - Focus on Senior Citizens

FTA - Federal Transit Administration

Functional Classification System - a system to distinguish roads according to the type of service provided

GHG - Greenhouse Gas

GIS - Geographic Information System - a computer system that links cartographic images with databases and allows the user to create new maps and databases through various means, including overlay and query operations

IIJA - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

ISTEA - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991

ITS - Intelligent Transportation System

JARC - Job Access and Reverse Commute - Federal Transit Administration Section 5316 funding program

LAP - Language Access Plan, sometimes referred to as a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan

LEP - Limited English Proficiency

LEP Plan - Limited English Proficiency Plan - outlines how the MPO and RPO integrates people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) into the transportation planning process - sometimes referred to as a Language Access Plan (LAP)

LOC - Local funding

Long-Range Transportation Plan - outlines projects that will be required to meet the needs of an area over an extended period, usually 20 years, revised every four to five years

LRTP - Long-Range Transportation Plan

LVOE - Level of Effort

MAP-21 - Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (Public Law 112-141)

MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization, Tuscaloosa Area MPO

MPO-Portal - web-based software used to manage and integrate the TIP and STIP processes and databases; replaced TELUS

MO - Maintenance and Operation, same as federal O&M and TSMO, ALDOT preference

MO Project - Maintenance and Operation project, same as federal O&M project and TSMO project, ALDOT preference

NAAQS - National Ambient Air Quality Standards

New Freedom - Federal Transit Administration Section 5317 funding program

NHS - National Highway System, a transportation funding category, only projects on designated NHS routes can use these funds; also NHSP

O&M - operations and management, same as MO and TSMO

O&M Project - a project that improves the operation and/or management of a transportation system; examples include turn lanes, traffic signal optimization, ITS center, same as MO Project and TSMO Project

OP - Operating funds (transit)

PARA - Parks and Recreation Authority

PE - Preliminary Engineering - the first phase of most transportation projects, the study and design of the project

PL - Metropolitan Planning Funds

Public Forum - designated time during RPO and MPO meetings in which the public or interested parties may address the Policy Committee or Advisory Committees

Public Hearing - hearings to formally present information and gather public input for projects and plans - The Tuscaloosa Area MPO and West Alabama RPO do not hold public hearings. The Alabama Department of Transportation and local governments conduct public hearings for specific projects.

Public Meeting - meetings held by the Tuscaloosa Area MPO and West Alabama RPO to review draft transportation planning documents - The Tuscaloosa Area MPO holds public meetings for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and the Public Involvement Plan (PIP).

Public Review - public reviews allow anyone to examine and comment on draft documents during a specified period of time - The Tuscaloosa Area MPO and West Alabama RPO holds public reviews for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Public Involvement Plan (PIP), and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. During the review period, draft documents are available on the internet, the West Alabama Regional Commission, and the Transit Authority. The review period extends from the date the MPO or RPO adopts the draft document for public review until the MPO or RPO adopts the final document, generally two months.

ROW - Right of Way - a phase of transportation projects, the purchase of right of way

RPO - Rural Planning Organization, West Alabama RPO

RW - Right of Way - a phase of transportation projects, the purchase of right of way

SAFETEA-LU - Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users - (Pub. L. 109–59, August 10, 2005)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on the disability

Section 5303 - Federal Transit Administration funding program for technical studies

Section 5307 - Federal Transit Administration funding program for urban area transit capital and operating expenses, see Section 5339

Section 5309 - Federal Transit Administration funding program for capital transit improvements

Section 5310 - Federal Transit Administration funding program for elderly and disabled transit capital assistance

Section 5311 - Federal Transit Administration funding program for rural area transit capital and operating expenses

Section 5316 - Federal Transit Administration funding program for job access and reverse commute transit, also known as JARC

Section 5317 - Federal Transit Administration funding program for new Americans with Disabilities Act transit assistance, also known as New Freedoms

Section 5339 - Federal Transit Administration funding program for bus and bus facilities; replaced Section 5309 in MAP-21, eligible to 5307 recipients

SHSP - Strategic Highway Safety Plan

SPR - State Planning and Research funds

ST - State funding

STP - Surface Transportation Program

STAA - Surface Transportation Any Area funding category, represents funds that may be used anywhere in the state, ALDOT has the authority to allocate these funds

STIP - State Transportation Improvement Program

STOA - Surface Transportation Other Area funding category, represents funds that are used in Urban Areas with populations less than 200,000

STP - Surface Transportation Program, a transportation funding category, Urban Areas are allocated an amount of funds annually based on a specific per capita dollar amount

TAP - Transportation Alternatives Program

TARC - Tuscaloosa Association of Retarded Citizens, also known as The ARC

TAZ - Transportation Analysis Zone - districts used for computer traffic modeling

TCC - Technical Coordinating Committee

TCPTA - Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority, also known as Tuscaloosa Metro Transit, Tuscaloosa Trolley, the Authority

TDOT - Tuscaloosa Department of Transportation

TEA-21 - Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century

TIP - Transportation Improvement Program - a list of funded MPO projects slated to begin over a four-year period, revised every four years

Title VI - Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC 2000d* (Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs)

TMA - Transportation Management Area, area designated by the Secretary of Transportation, having an urbanized area population of over 200,000

TR - Transit project

Transportation Enhancement (TE) Funds - Under pre-MAP-21 legislation, ten percent of all Surface Transportation Program funds allocated to a state are required to be spent on enhancement projects. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, acquisition of historic sites and construction of pedestrian or bicycle facilities

TSMO - Transportation System Management and Operations, same as MO and O&M

TSMO Project - a project that improves the operation and/or management of a transportation system; examples include turn lanes, traffic signal optimization, ITS center, same as MO Project and O&M Project

UCP - United Cerebral Palsy

UMTA - Urban Mass Transit Administration; now known as FTA

UPWP - Unified Planning Work Program - a set of tasks that the WARC staff is committed to perform over a fiscal year, revised annually

Urban Area Boundary - boundary surrounding a Census Bureau-defined urbanized area, established by the MPO with ALDOT and FHWA approval

UT - Utility Construction - a phase of transportation projects, the relocation of utilities

WAPDC - West Alabama Planning and Development Council; now known as West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC)

WARC - West Alabama Regional Commission

WARPO - West Alabama Rural Planning Organization

West Central Region - Alabama Department of Transportation Region, office located in Tuscaloosa County, includes 14 counties in West Alabama, Replaced the 5th Division in 2014