Alabama Department of Transportation

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

for Statewide Transportation Planning

2021 Update

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

REVISION TABLE

Date	Revision History	Comments

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Alabama Department of Transportation would like to thank the below agencies and organizations which helped to review and provide key feedback informing the development of this Public Involvement Plan update.

AGENCY SURVEY AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

ALDOT Bureaus

Bureau of Office Engineer
Aeronautics Bureau
Bridge Bureau
Compliance & Business Opportunities Bureau
Design Bureau
Local Transportation Bureau
Media & Community Relations Bureau
Right-of-Way Bureau

ALDOT Regions

East Central Region
North Region
Southeast Region
Southwest Region
West Central Region

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Auburn-Opelika MPO
Birmingham MPO
Calhoun Area MPO
Columbus-Phenix City MPO (City of Columbus)
Decatur MPO (City of Decatur)
Eastern Shore MPO
Florida-Alabama TPO
Gadsen-Etowah MPO (City of Gasden)
Huntsville Area MPO (City of Huntsville)
Mobile MPO
Montgomery MPO (City of Montgomery)
Shoals Area MPO
Southeast Wiregrass Area MPO (City of Dothan)
Tuscaloosa Area MPO

Regional/Rural Planning Organizations

Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission
Central Alabama Reg. Planning & Dev. Commission
East Alabama Reg. Planning & Dev. Commission
Lee-Russell Council of Governments
North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments
Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
South Central Alabama Development Commission
Southeast Alabama Reg. Planning & Dev. Commission
Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments
West Alabama Regional Commission

Federal Highway Administration

Alabama Division

Federal Transit Administration

Region 4

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM

Michael Baker International

Kaitlin Davidson, Fred Jones, Brooks Miller, Dara Osher, Troy Truax

Shumer Consulting, LLC

Missi Shumer

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FOREWORD

Transportation planning and programming are the processes of defining future goals, policies, designs, and investments to support mobility throughout a region. The processes include identifying transportation needs and aligning those needs with budgets, goals, and policies to meet federal, state, and local requirements and regulations. No one entity is solely responsible for transportation planning and programming in Alabama. Rather, it is a collaborative effort among the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), transit agencies, stakeholders, and the public.

Federal guidelines require states to document their process for providing the public an opportunity to participate in statewide transportation planning, including review and comment at key decision points (23 CFR 450.210 [a]). The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) of 2012 and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015 emphasize continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative public participation in the transportation planning and programming process. Specifically, federal legislation requires agencies to engage the public when developing and amending transportation planning documents, including public involvement plans. Both the transportation planning and environmental processes adhere to the following minimum requirements:

- Establish early and continuous opportunities for participation
- Conduct public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times
- Supply timely information on transportation issues, processes, and procedures
- Provide reasonable access to technical and policy information
- Ensure electronic accessibility via the internet
- Give adequate notice for participation opportunities at key decision points
- Incorporate methods for considering and responding to public input
- Seek and consider the needs of traditionally underserved groups (minority, low income, elderly, etc.)
- Perform periodic review and evaluation of the participation process

Communication methods have changed significantly, and public outreach techniques and technologies used to satisfy requirements have expanded over time. Additionally, public planning agencies across the country have experienced unprecedented challenges, such as a global pandemic that prevented in-person meetings and challenged agencies to reevaluate how they engage the public. In light of these changing conditions, this Public Involvement Plan (PIP):

1. updates procedures to comply with current federal regulations,
2. addresses changes and challenges that have occurred in recent years, and
3. provides a useful tool for transportation planning organizations in Alabama.

This PIP documents ALDOT's compliance process; describes the techniques it uses to achieve equitable, transparent, timely, and meaningful public involvement; and demonstrates ALDOT's commitment to achieving effective public participation in the statewide transportation planning process.

About this PIP

Throughout this document, **bolded** references to appendices, such as **Appendix A: Glossary of Acronyms and Terms**, can be clicked to link to that appendix. In-text references to **Figures** and **Photos** will also appear **bolded**. There are also clickable hyperlinks that lead to additional information and resources throughout the PIP.

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

The purpose of this PIP is to describe the techniques the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) uses to achieve equitable and timely public involvement in the statewide transportation planning process. Federal guidelines require states to have a documented process for providing the public an opportunity to participate in statewide transportation planning, including review and comment at key decision points (23 CFR 450.210 [a]). This resource is ALDOT's documented process to comply with federal and state regulations. This PIP demonstrates ALDOT's commitment to effective public participation and its importance to the statewide planning process. **Appendix A: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms** contains a glossary of terms and acronyms used throughout this document. Copies of federal and state regulations that govern this process are contained in **Appendix B: Federal and State Regulations**.

This PIP was developed in consultation with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), ALDOT Bureaus and Regions, planning organizations, and transit agencies. Planning organizations include both Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Non-Metropolitan Planning Organizations (non-MPOs). MPOs are federally-mandated and funded organizations that guide regional cooperation in transportation planning and are required in urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000. Non-MPOs include Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), and Councils of Government (COGs), which assist ALDOT in identifying transportation needs in non-urbanized areas (i.e., areas with populations of fewer than 50,000). Both MPOs and non-MPOs maintain their own Public Participation Plans (PPP), which are consistent with this PIP. **Appendix C: Stakeholder Survey Results Summary** summarizes the input received from stakeholders, and **Appendix D: References to Other Plans** contains links to plans prepared by ALDOT, MPOs, RPCs, and RPOs.

The process for public involvement laid out in this PIP ensures that all Alabamians have the opportunity to provide input on transportation issues, needs, and priorities and to comment on policies, guidelines, and programs that address those needs into the future. While this document serves as a guide for ALDOT, planning organizations, and other stakeholders, it is not intended to be all-inclusive of every possible outreach or method that can be used. Rather, organizations are encouraged to identify and implement outreach methodologies and tools that are most effective in reaching their targeted audiences and public involvement objectives.

The PIP identifies how and when the public must be engaged to update or amend the Alabama Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), descriptions of which can be found in **Appendix A: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms**. The SWTP assesses the current conditions, needs, and priorities of the state's transportation system network over a twenty (20)-year period, while the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) documents the surface transportation projects (Highway, Transit) that will be implemented over a four (4)-year period. Surface transportation refers to the movement of people or goods via roads, ships, or trains. Once projects are adopted into the state's program for implementation, the public involvement process follows the procedures outlined in the ALDOT Public Involvement Plan for the Environmental Process, which is described in more detail later in this chapter.

What is the Public's Role in Transportation Planning?

Transportation planning and decision-making impact everyone. Therefore, public involvement and participation are essential to the planning process. A transportation plan, project, or program is more likely to meet success if there is an early and continuous effort to achieve community buy-in (i.e., the opportunity to provide feedback and input) from stakeholders and the public. This effort includes educating stakeholders and the public on the transportation development process, providing opportunities to be involved in the process, and ensuring equitable opportunities for public involvement among all populations, including those who have historically been underrepresented.

About ALDOT

HIGHWAYS & ROADWAYS

BRIDGES

RAIL

FERRY

AVIATION

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN

PUBLIC TRANSIT

ALDOT manages the state's transportation systems, including highways and roadways, bridges, rail, ferry, aviation, bicycle and pedestrian, and public transit. Committed to excellence in transportation, ALDOT additionally promotes and maintains Alabama's transportation infrastructure through adequate funding. The Department is divided into 24 bureaus with a collective mission of providing a safe, efficient, and environmentally-sound intermodal transportation system for all users and the taxpayers of Alabama. ALDOT relies on public involvement to help shape and facilitate the intermodal connections that enhance socioeconomic development and prosperity through the efficient movement of people and goods within the state.

ALDOT's Organization & Responsibilities

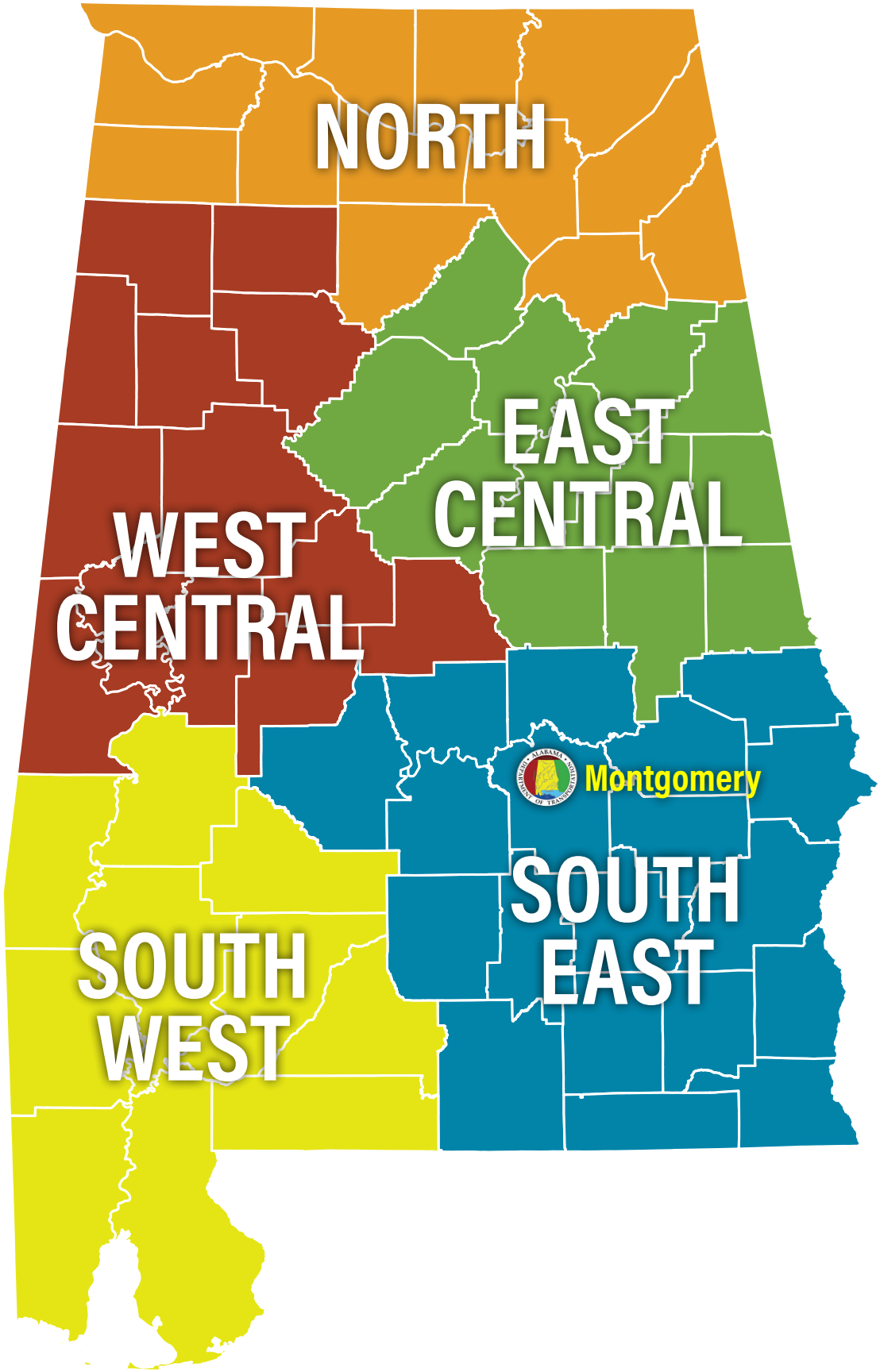
ALDOT is organized into five geographic regions, with the Central Office located in Montgomery, AL (see **Figure 1**). The Regions throughout the state serve the public through project development, implementation, and maintenance to provide a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound intermodal transportation system. The Media and Community Relations Bureau, along with each Region's Public Information Specialist, communicates various issues concerning public participation activities to reporters and the public. ALDOT Regions assist the Design Bureau – Environmental Technical Section in conducting project-specific public involvement activities. ALDOT Region Offices also assist with public outreach efforts on updates to the statewide transportation plans.

ALDOT's Administrative Office, located at the Central Office, is instrumental in providing leadership and guidance concerning the area of transportation planning. Transportation planning and programming duties are broken into two bureaus, the Bureau of Office Engineer and the Local Transportation Bureau. The Bureau of Office Engineer is primarily responsible for Statewide Transportation Planning, and the Local Transportation Bureau provides assistance to local planning agencies, including MPOs and non-MPOs.

Mission of ALDOT

To provide a safe, efficient, environmentally-sound intermodal transportation system for all users, especially the taxpayers of Alabama. To facilitate economic and social development and prosperity through the efficient movement of people and goods and to facilitate intermodal connections within Alabama. To demand excellence in transportation and be involved in promoting adequate funding to promote and maintain Alabama's transportation infrastructure.

Figure 1: The Alabama Department of Transportation is comprised of five regions with a central office in Montgomery



The Bureau of Office Engineer is the Office of Record for the Department and acts in an advisory capacity to the Transportation Director, Chief Engineer's Office, Bureau Chiefs, and Region Engineers in matters of project lettings, finance, and administration of federal funds, as well as other areas pertaining to the general function of ALDOT. The Bureau is divided into five primary subsections: Engineering (including federal aid authorizations, subletting, and labor compliance), Plans and Proposals (including contractor prequalification), Contract Preparation and Review, Planning Studies, and Project Management.

The Planning Studies Section is responsible for performing transportation planning studies as required by federal law and to support the planning and programming of resources. This includes the development and management of the SWTP, STIP, Statewide Freight Plan and Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Additionally, the Section coordinates transportation planning activities with the Local Transportation Bureau, other Bureaus and Regions, FHWA, and other stakeholders as directed. The Planning Studies Section also acts as a departmental resource to support the Project Management section. The Project Management Section supports ALDOT's construction program by tracking project data and status from inception to completion that includes details of project financing and project scheduling. Project Management also is responsible for developing and maintaining the Comprehensive Project Management System (CPMS), a client server-based project, program, and financial-aid management system. CPMS is the principal source for developing the STIP. Project Management also consults with the Planning Studies Section and the Local Transportation Bureau on programming matters.

The Local Transportation Bureau is responsible for the administration of FHWA, FTA, and State Road and Bridge Funds allocated to Local Public Agencies (LPAs) within the State of Alabama. These agencies include 67 counties, 14 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), 12 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)/Rural Planning Organization (RPOs), municipalities, regional small urban and rural transit providers, and qualifying non-profit organizations. These funds are used for planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of locally owned and operated transportation facilities.

Key Partners and Stakeholders

Role of the MPOs and Non-MPOs

MPOs and non-MPOs play an important role in ensuring the success of the public involvement process for the update of the SWTP and the STIP. MPOs and non-MPOs may be asked to share their e-mail and mail distribution lists used for public outreach to supplement ALDOT's mailing lists, providing the state with a more complete database for distributing information to interested parties statewide. The planning organizations' mailing lists should include representatives from stakeholder groups, such as:

- Environmental Justice (EJ) communities (e.g., elderly, minority, people with disabilities, and low income)
- Organizations representing transportation operations (rail, truck, airport, transit, etc.)
- Representatives of bicycle and pedestrian groups with an interest in alternative modes of transportation
- Local development interests such as Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Authorities
- Other organizations with interests that relate to transportation mobility and transportation access

MPOs and non-MPOs may also be asked to identify local media outlets that can be used to reach the public. MPOs and non-MPOs may be asked to assist ALDOT in arranging and conducting meetings with local groups to discuss the plan or study, needs assessment, and findings. These planning organizations can assist with logistics for the meetings, including finding suitable and accessible locations, arranging virtual meetings as necessary, notifying the public of engagement opportunities, and soliciting input from the public on plan progress. For these meetings, ALDOT provides the presentation materials and information regarding the latest status of plan development to share with interested parties. Representatives from the local ALDOT Region may

also participate in these activities to meet with members of the community.

General Public

The general public includes anyone who uses the roads, rail, bridges, transit, water and air throughout the state. By engaging in conversations and dialogue with the users, ALDOT can better understand how the public uses transportation infrastructure, identify deficiencies, and prioritize solutions to address needs.

Non-Metropolitan Local Official Consultation

Per 23 CFR 450, states are required to provide non-metropolitan local officials, tribal governments, and the Department of Interior the opportunity to participate in the development of the statewide transportation plans. By law, this is a separate process from the public involvement process. ALDOT follows a separate operational directive/guideline to ensure that these organizations are provided opportunities to participate prior to any revisions or updates to statewide transportation plans (see **Appendix I: Non-Metropolitan Local Officials Cooperative Process Directive**). Some of the organizations that may assist in this outreach (descriptions of which can be found in **Appendix A: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms**) include, but are not limited to:

- Regional and Rural Planning Organizations
- Alabama Association of County Commissioners
- Alabama Association of County Engineers
- Alabama League of Municipalities
- Alabama Indian Affairs Commission

When is Public Involvement Applicable?

Public involvement is needed in all phases of a transportation project, plan, or study. While public involvement becomes applicable during the initial planning and project identification phase, the key to successful and meaningful public involvement is consistent engagement. In general, engagement starts with educating the public on the overall project development process. Components of education may include posting information about the process (e.g., maps, infographics, and brochures), updating websites, hosting in-person events, or displaying informational signs along roadways. The public involvement effort should be scaled to match the magnitude of the task at hand.

ALDOT Public Involvement Plan for the Environmental Process

Public involvement is an essential part of the environmental process. In 1969, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) established policies and procedures that agencies must follow to implement proposed transportation projects that require federal funds or approval. The NEPA process requires federal agencies to assess the effects of their proposed actions on the human and natural environment prior to making decisions. While the public involvement process for projects begins with development of broader statewide transportation plans, such as the SWTP or STIP, coordination with stakeholders and the public continues throughout the environmental, design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases of proposed projects to ensure that local interests and needs are considered by decision-makers.

ALDOT's Design Bureau – Environmental Technical Section (ETS) maintains a separate PIP that defines the process to conduct project-specific public involvement activities to satisfy NEPA. The plan was developed in accordance with 23 CFR 771 – Environmental Impact and Related Procedures. ALDOT's Public Involvement Plan for the Environmental Process (Environmental PIP) guides the public involvement process for projects under ETS purview, including those that may be sponsored by cities and/or counties. The Environmental PIP may be updated or revised in response to changes in laws or policies, or as required to satisfy legal opinions or findings.

2 PLANS, PROGRAMS, AND OBJECTIVES

What are Long-Range Transportation Planning and Programming?

Long-range transportation planning and programming are the processes of creating a blueprint for guiding statewide and regional decision-making and investments in transportation over the next 20 years. Statewide transportation planning considers all transportation modes important to the public and the statewide system. The planning process establishes goals and ranks transportation needs for the entire state. Transportation programming chooses and funds projects that meet the needs of the statewide plans and priorities.

What is the STIP?

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a federally-mandated four-year funding and scheduling document for surface transportation projects, including roads, highways, pedestrian trails, bicycle facilities, bridge facilities, and transit projects in Alabama. The program serves as a statewide, prioritized listing of transportation projects to be implemented over the next four years. A project must be included in the STIP in order to receive federal and state funds. The STIP must be financially constrained. This means that only projects for which construction and operating funds can reasonably be expected to be available are included in the program.

The STIP is updated every four years. The STIP must be consistent with the statewide transportation plan and transportation plans developed by MPOs and non-MPOs. As a result, the process to develop the STIP is coordinated with various partners, including local, state, and federal agencies and organizations. Before the STIP can be approved, the public must be provided the opportunity to review and comment on the document.

Amendment Process for the STIP

There are times when the STIP requires a revision between four-year cycles. There are two ways to address revisions: amendments and administrative modifications.

What is an Amendment?

In the context of transportation planning, an amendment is a revision approved by the state in accordance with its public involvement process. [23 CFR 450.104]

STIP amendments are major revisions that require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or an updated conformity determination (for "non-exempt" projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas). Major revisions consist of:

- The addition or deletion of a project
- A major change in project cost
- A major change in project initiation dates
- A major change in design concept or design scope

Administrative modifications are minor revisions that do not require public review and comment.

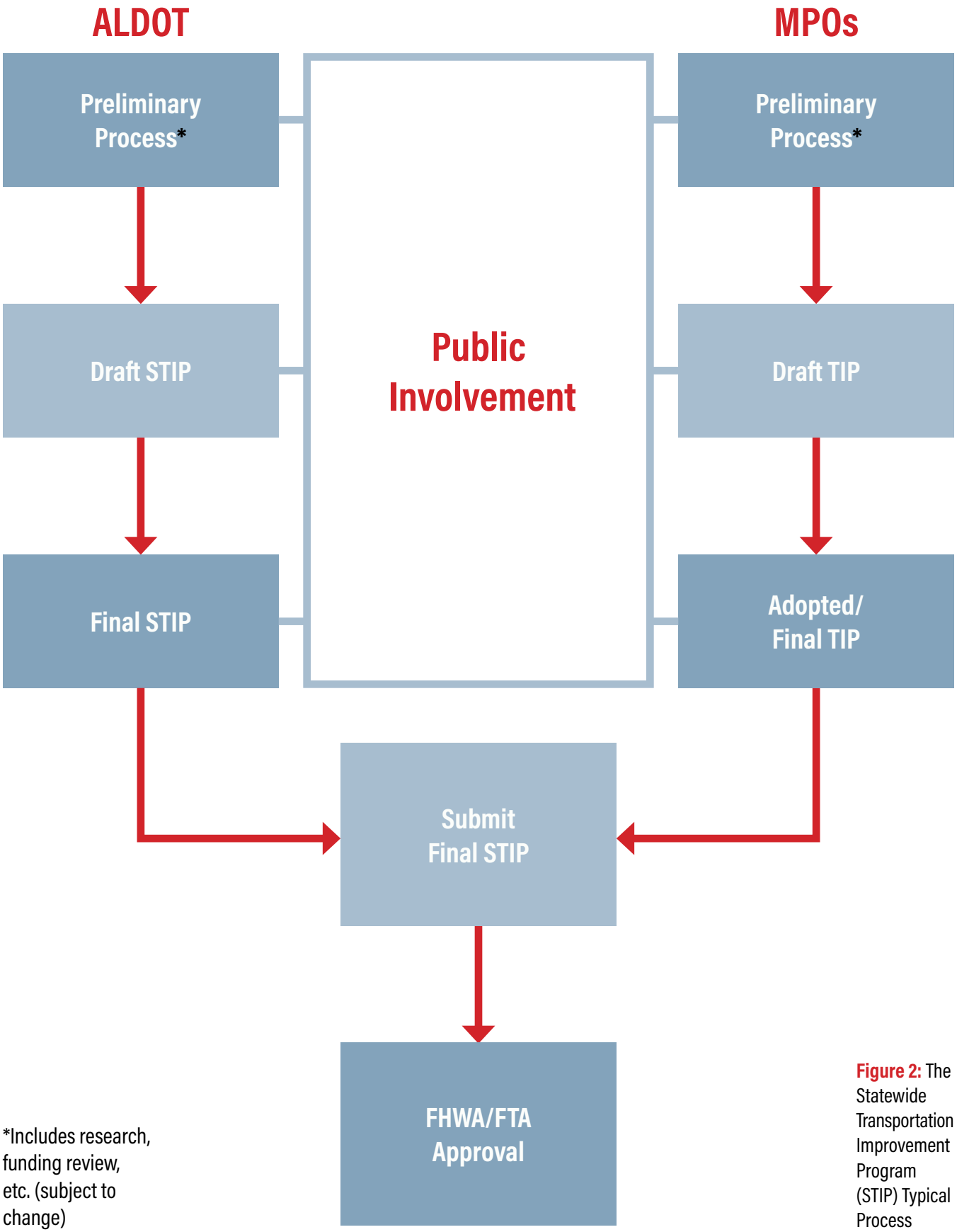
If necessary, amendments to the STIP are conducted on a bi-monthly cycle. Non-routine amendments requested by the State Transportation Director or the Joint Transportation Committee can be performed at any time. Administrative modifications are made as needed.

Highway and road projects are approved by FHWA, and transit projects are approved by FTA.

What is an Administrative Modification?

An administrative modification is a minor revision to a transportation plan or program (i.e., project costs, funding sources, and/or project initiation dates) that does not require public review and comment.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Typical Process



*Includes research, funding review, etc. (subject to change)

Figure 2: The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Typical Process

FHWA and FTA only authorize projects and approve grants for projects that are included in the currently approved STIP. If an MPO, non-MPO, transit agency, or ALDOT wishes to proceed with a project not programmed in the STIP, the STIP must be revised.

All revisions maintain year-to-year fiscal constraint for each of the four years of the STIP. All revisions account for when the funds will be spent (year of expenditure) and maintain the estimated total cost of the project, which may extend beyond the four years of the STIP. The arbitrary reduction of the overall cost of a project or a project phase cannot be used for the advancement of another project. In addition, amendments must be consistent with the SWTP, and when required, public involvement activities must be conducted in accordance with the Statewide PIP. Reasonable opportunities for public review and comment are provided for significant revisions to the STIP.

What is the SWTP?

The Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) is a long-range, macro-level assessment of the state's transportation system network. It summarizes the system's current conditions and identifies its needs and priorities for a minimum of 20 years. It is a multimodal plan that evaluates all modes of passenger and freight transportation—roadways and bridges, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, rail, aviation, and waterways. The SWTP evaluates investments in infrastructure and maintenance and compares them to historic and anticipated funding levels.

The SWTP establishes the programs, policies, and strategies that will be the focus of the state's future transportation efforts. It does not provide a detailed assessment of transportation conditions within one specific region or for one particular mode of travel. Those activities are carried out by planning organizations across Alabama or bureaus within ALDOT. The SWTP does not include a detailed listing of short-term, prioritized projects, which is instead contained within the STIP. The SWTP is reviewed and periodically updated, usually every four years.

Amendment Process for the SWTP

Similar to the STIP, amendments are used to make major revisions to the SWTP, and administrative modifications are used to make minor revisions.

What is the Framework for Partner and Stakeholder Engagement during Updates to the STIP and SWTP?

Updates to the STIP and the SWTP include opportunities for partner and stakeholder engagement at key decision points in the process. However, because the two plans differ in purpose and planning horizons, the processes to update the plans vary slightly. **Figure 2** displays the typical process for updating the STIP. ALDOT engages with stakeholders throughout the entire process. At a minimum, stakeholders provide input prior to releasing the Draft STIP for public review and comment, and they assist ALDOT in addressing public comments after the review period ends, if necessary. Specifically, MPOs supply ALDOT with their Final Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) so that those projects can be included in the STIP. The STIP and any amendments are available to the MPOs. They are available online and amendments are sent by email as well. Non-MPOs are not required to maintain their own TIP, so ALDOT works with those organizations to identify projects in non-urban areas for inclusion in the STIP. MPOs and non-MPOs typically assist ALDOT in conducting public outreach activities when the STIP is in the process of being updated.

Figure 3 displays the typical process for updating the SWTP. Two groups of stakeholders provide input throughout the update process. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provides technical support, including data collection and access to relevant studies and land use and comprehensive plans. TAC members may include MPO and RPO staff members, ALDOT region engineers, and representatives from other state agencies, such as the Alabama Department of Environmental Management. Finally, the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) consists of key transportation stakeholders who are invited

Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) Typical Process

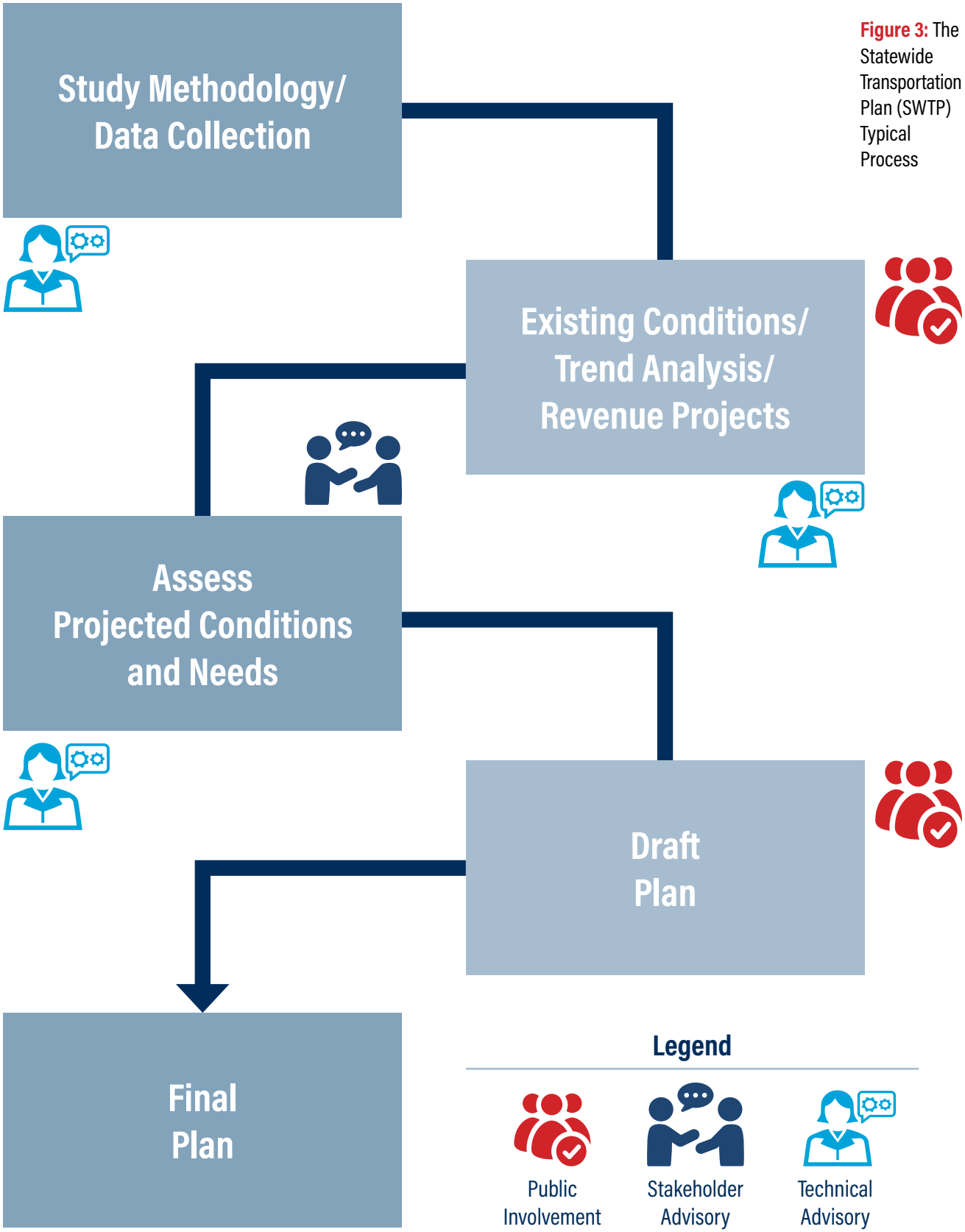


Figure 3: The Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) Typical Process

Note: This process subject to change as needed.

to participate and play a more advisory role to the goals and objectives of the SWTP.

The SAG typically includes representatives from environmental agencies, transit, trucking, ports, airports, bicycle and pedestrian groups, Indian Tribes, economic development authorities, and EJ advocacy groups from across the state. The SAG's primary role is to identify transportation needs and provide feedback on findings and recommendations to fulfill those needs. Together, these three advisory groups provide input and feedback on proposed actions throughout the SWTP update process.

It should be noted that while updates to transportation plans require opportunities for public input, the length of the comment periods and levels of required public engagement vary depending on the type of document and the agency responsible for its preparation. **Appendix E: Statewide Transportation Plans and Processes Guide** presents information on transportation plans and opportunities for comment periods and public engagement.

What Other Types of Plans or Studies are Relevant?

Some statewide plans or studies are extensions of the long-range plan and may require occasional updates. The following describes some of the additional plans that are currently in place:

Statewide Freight Plan

The FAST Act of 2015 included a provision that requires each state that receives funding under the National Highway Freight Program to develop a State Freight Plan that provides a comprehensive plan for the immediate and long-range planning activities and investments of the state with respect to freight. The plan must meet all the required contents listed in the FAST Act. ALDOT maintains Alabama's Statewide Freight Plan that establishes freight planning and performance monitoring activities and aligns Alabama's freight policy with the most recent federal legislation and related guidance from the Office of Freight Management and Operations in FHWA.

Key plan elements include:

- Overview of relevant policy that influences freight planning at the statewide level
- Update of existing and projected commodity flows and freight network characteristics, which provide the baseline for identifying needs statewide
- Identification of a National Highway Freight Network, based on criteria consistent with federal policy and input from stakeholders
- Summary of freight improvements of statewide significance, forming the overall Freight Investment Plan
- Initial framework for freight project prioritization and performance monitoring for ALDOT's use and refinement over the coming years

When preparing the SWTP and STIP, ALDOT considers recommendations and strategies from the Statewide Freight Plan to ensure compatibility across planning documents.

Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

ALDOT maintains a Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The purpose of the plan is to establish a vision that supports walking and bicycling as modes of transportation in Alabama. Developed by ALDOT with input from stakeholders across the state, this plan aims to guide investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs that achieve the greatest improvements with limited available funding.

The plan also serves as a tool for ensuring that projects included in the SWTP and STIP are compatible with initiatives and strategies for alternative modes of transportation identified in the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

What are ALDOT's Public Involvement Goals and Strategies?

ALDOT's goal is to provide a proactive public involvement process that increases public awareness and understanding, offers complete information and timely public notice, supports early and continued involvement of the public and stakeholders, and provides opportunities for meaningful involvement and citizen feedback. To achieve this goal, ALDOT has established five objectives for creating and maintaining an effective public participation process, as shown in **Figure 4**.

Incorporating Equity into the Transportation Planning Process

Equity is a vital aspect of public involvement that allows for more diverse and inclusive representation of stakeholders and the public. Equity analyses can be utilized to evaluate the success or failure of public involvement and impacts of transportation investments on environmental justice communities. FHWA has established guidelines all agencies should try to follow to incorporate equity into the transportation planning process:

- **STEP ONE:** Consider any potential equity impacts of pricing early in the project—during the planning and design phases.
- **STEP TWO:** Determine users potentially impacted by the proposed project as well as regional equity priorities.
- **STEP THREE:** Evaluate equity impacts associated with a given plan, program, or project.
- **STEP FOUR:** Consider a variety of perspectives and impacts.
- **STEP FIVE:** Measure effects.

What is Environmental Justice?

The U.S. Department of Transportation defines Environmental Justice (EJ) as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, ethnicity, income, national origin, or educational level with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Fair treatment means that no population, due to policy or economic disempowerment, is forced to bear a disproportionate burden of the negative human health and environmental impacts, including social and economic effects, resulting from transportation decisions, programs and policies made, implemented, and enforced at the federal, state, local, or tribal level.

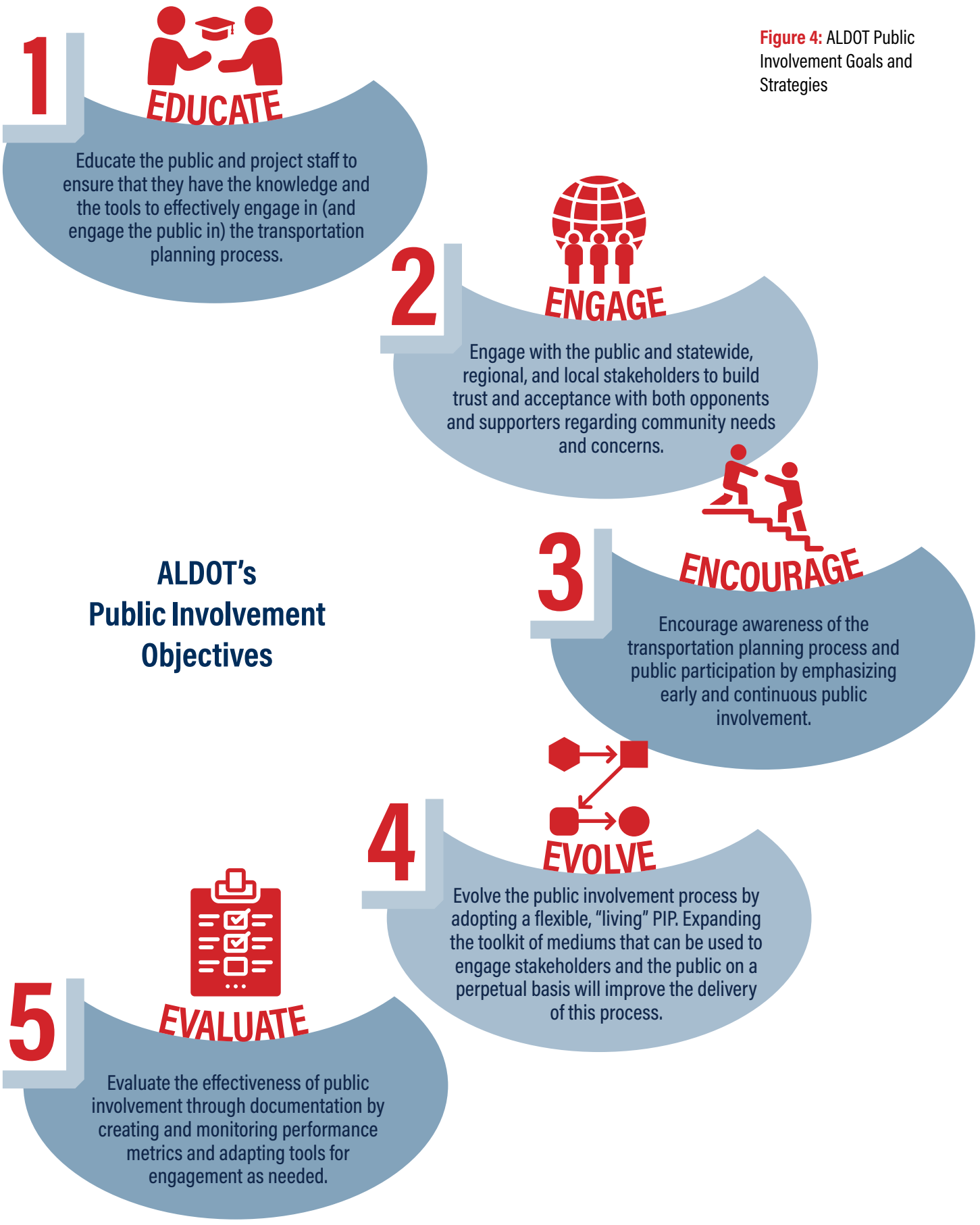
Executive Order 12898 requires each federal agency to "make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations."

Other analyses, such as refined Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping tools, may be used to determine the degree to which disadvantaged populations are considered and involved in planning processes.

What is ALDOT's Public Involvement Process?

ALDOT's public involvement process is used to inform the public and stakeholders on the development of planning recommendations for strategic plans including the SWTP and

Figure 4: ALDOT Public Involvement Goals and Strategies



STIP, as well as agency coordinated planning studies. While the public involvement process for the development of formal planning documents typically includes a nine-step process, it is important to note that the details and communication channels used in each step can vary depending on the specific plan or study. Regardless of the techniques used to do so, the public engagement process itself is strategically followed to ensure conclusiveness of the conducted outreach and is repeated when significant revisions are made or document amendments are proposed.

ALDOT'S PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STEPS

STEP ONE: Define study area and identify target audience.

If the study area is not predefined by the planning recommendations or planning study scope, the boundaries should be defined. The size of this area and complexity of public outreach depends upon the type of plan, plan amendment, or study. Since different involvement techniques may be required to ensure inclusion, it is important to understand the various populations that work and live in the study area so communication methods can be tailored to their needs and preferences. Making sure that all interested stakeholders and members of the public are provided the opportunity to provide input aids in complying with federal nondiscrimination regulations, including Title VI and EJ. FHWA equity evaluation guidelines mentioned above can help to enhance representation of these and other historically disadvantaged groups in the transportation planning process.

In addition to legal requirements, the more that is known about the study area population, the more effective public involvement will be. Creating a focused distribution list is crucial to notify citizens of public involvement activities. To populate this list, organizations may perform a demographic analysis to ensure all populations within the study area are represented. Additional techniques include providing a link on the organization's website that allows individuals to submit requests to be added to distribution lists. It is important to note that the distribution list for each plan or study is dynamic and should change and/or grow as new and interested parties are identified.

STEP TWO: Establish public involvement timeline and outreach goals.

Once the study area is defined and the target audience is identified, engagement coordinators can identify the specific engagement methods that will complement the needed outreach. Then, a timeline can be created. At a minimum, the timeline may include a detailed schedule, deadlines, and milestones for each step of the public engagement process. The timeline also serves as a useable tool or checklist to ensure the process stays on schedule and meets public comment period requirements. As the timeline emerges, the team can utilize data gathered (i.e., study area demographics, target audience details, and the developed timeline) to set goals. To the extent practicable, the goals for public engagement should be both qualitative and quantitative and specific to the intended tasks.

STEP THREE: Initiate organized advisory group if applicable.

Advisory groups may be comprised of ALDOT region engineers, the MPOs and non-MPOs, FHWA, representatives of state agencies, private sector modal, economic development, advocacy organizations, and other interested individuals. Advisory groups provide input to ALDOT on transportation issues and assist in communicating with citizens and stakeholder communities throughout the state. Depending on the complexity of the plan or study and the level of engagement needed from such stakeholders, advisory groups can meet regularly at scheduled times, receive detailed updates/revisions digitally and provide feedback, or a combination of all.

STEP FOUR: Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities.

Making information available to the public is a process that is initiated early and continues throughout the entire planning or study process. Recipients of public notifications reflect a wide range of participants. A wide variety of methods to providing adequate public notice can be used. These methods may include publishing formal public notices/

advertisements in newspapers, press releases to tv and radio media, mailing information to a distribution list comprised of individuals and organized stakeholders interested in transportation issues, circulating newsletters, publishing information on websites, sharing links to websites, surveys, and other information on local social media outlets, and providing multiple ways for citizens to ask questions and provide comments (i.e., in-person, written comment forms, telephone, and/or online). Special emphasis is placed on identifying and notifying EJ communities.

Notices are disseminated through available media outlets, where available, and/or postings at locations within the EJ community. Places of worship, schools, recreation facilities, and/or other locations where community members regularly gather are examples of locations that are typically effective in reaching underserved populations. The materials distributed are geared to the public and provide summary information in layman's terms. Public notices identify a person to contact at least one week prior to a meeting with requests for special accommodations for persons with disabilities, including the deaf or blind. They also indicate how comments can be submitted and the deadline for providing comments.

STEP FIVE: Hold regional public input meetings.

Required meetings are held as appropriate throughout the planning process to receive public input. The meetings may follow an informal "open house" format, whereby ALDOT staff and other team members, as applicable, are available to answer questions and receive comments. All meeting locations meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards, Center of Disease Control (CDC) requirements, and, where possible, are accessible by public transportation. To the extent practicable, video and call-in communication channels may also be made available at the same time as the in-person public input meetings. Individuals participating virtually or via call-in should be given a paralleled experience where they receive the same information and opportunity to provide input.

Upon request and to the extent possible, ALDOT staff or their designee may also meet with small groups or community leaders to discuss activities and issues related to the SWTP, STIP, or planning study. These one-on-one meetings are held on an informal basis and conducted at mutually agreed upon locations and times. These meetings are documented and incorporated, as appropriate, into the draft plan documents.

STEP SIX: Distribute draft documents for review and provide adequate public notice.

Draft documents are made available for a public review and comment period (see **Appendix E** for comment period) prior to submittal to FHWA and FTA for approval. Notification of document availability is accomplished through official public notices in newspapers and ALDOT's website, mailers to citizens on the comprehensive mailing and distribution list, announcements in newsletters, and/or other channels, as appropriate. Efforts to include notifications to locations within minority communities, including the use of minority media outlets, to the extent practicable, are conducted. Electronic copies of the documents are distributed to ALDOT Region Offices, MPOs, non-MPOs, and other entities as appropriate. Printed copies are limited and are available by request only. The draft documents are also posted on ALDOT's website.

STEP SEVEN: Respond to public comments and publish input.

Comments received before, during, and after public meetings are collected, summarized, and distributed to appropriate ALDOT staff for response. A published summary of public comments and responses is made available to the public via ALDOT's website or included in the plan when the plan is distributed for public review.

STEP EIGHT: Publish and distribute the final document.

After review, the final documents are made available on ALDOT's website. Electronic copies of the documents are distributed to ALDOT Region Offices, MPOs, non-MPOs, and other entities, as appropriate. Printed copies are limited and are available by request only.

STEP NINE: Evaluate and document the conducted public involvement and the public involvement process.

ALDOT evaluates public involvement activities on a regular basis. To the extent practicable, the evaluation refers back to the goals established in Step 2 of the public involvement process and includes a review of both quantitative and qualitative indicators to gauge the overall effectiveness of the public involvement program. After each goal is measured and noted accordingly, it is also important to gauge the effectiveness of the process itself. Necessary revisions to the established public involvement process should be noted accordingly, amended as needed in the PIP, and followed during the next organized public involvement occurrence.

Formal changes to the PIP are circulated for a 45-day public review period to receive public comments on proposed revisions prior to adoption of an updated PIP. When the methods of measuring success are finalized, the entirety of the recently conducted public involvement/outreach process should be packaged up and filed accordingly. Public meeting announcements, agendas, summaries, recordings, educational materials, audience demographic data, process final reports, and any other relevant documentation are collectively gathered and organized.

What Public Engagement Techniques are Used by ALDOT?

ALDOT utilizes a variety of techniques to engage the public. Various techniques are selected for each outreach occurrence based on the type of document under development and the target audience ALDOT needs to reach. No two public outreach campaigns are the same. Many different factors can come into play as a scheduled public involvement process emerges. Therefore, having a variety of different communication channels available and understanding the benefits of each can greatly contribute to the success of an agency's public involvement efforts. ALDOT utilizes a combination of the following techniques during their various public involvement occurrences.

CONTACT DISTRIBUTION LIST

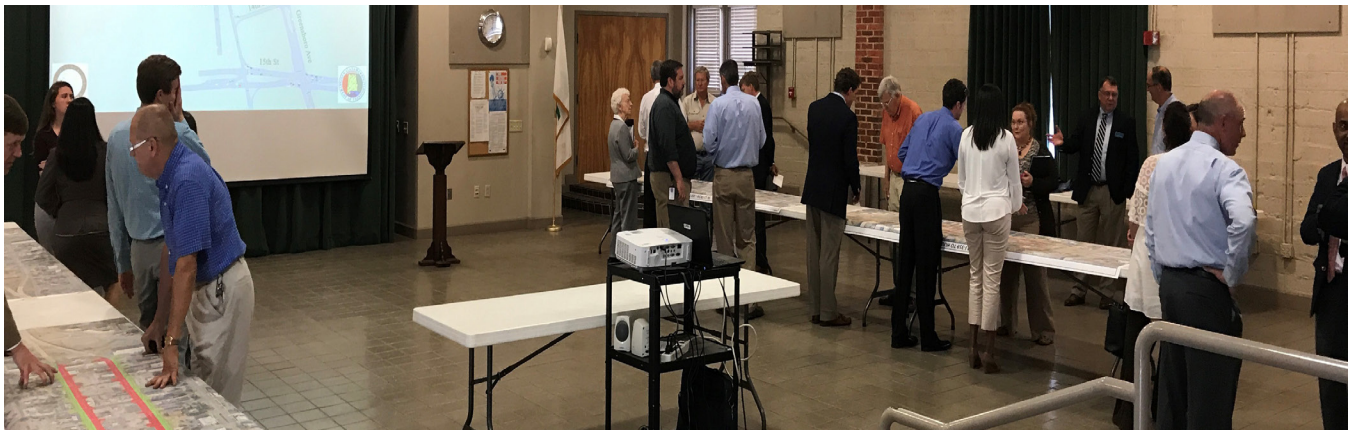
In addition to a broad-based involvement process, a conclusive list of key individuals, local officials, organized stakeholder groups, individuals interested in transportation issues, chambers of commerce, transportation providers, and public agencies throughout the state is developed with assistance from LPAs and planning organizations. In addition, contacts with minority associations, community organizations and recreation centers, places of worship, and housing authorities aid in helping to share information within underserved communities.

Just as the public involvement process evolves with each engagement occurrence, the distribution list should actively be increased and/or adjusted to ensure accuracy and broadness, obtaining as many contacts as possible. As interested parties are identified, they are added to this distribution list. It is ALDOT's goal to continuously communicate with this group of contacts, whether it be via educational newsletters, agency updates, or calls for action (i.e., public engagement opportunities, online survey activities, or other interactive feedback techniques). People on the list are asked to review or disseminate information, as well as provide and/or seek comments from their constituencies. The distribution list may also include physical mailing addresses for those willing to provide it, in addition to email addresses. Physical mailing addresses may become useful to visualize the overall geographic reach of your contact list or if a specific engagement occurrence involves reaching a particular demographic via postage.

ADVISORY GROUPS

Advisory groups are a way for ALDOT to coordinate a committee of transportation stakeholders to reflect the diverse transportation concerns of a population, especially groups or individuals representing traditionally underserved areas. A Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) is an example of a committee coordinated by ALDOT. Past SAGs have included planning organizations, state agencies representing environmental development, and other programs impacted by transportation. It may also include modal representatives from transit, trucking, ports, airports, bicycle and pedestrian

Photo 1: Image of a public involvement meeting for the Lurleen B. Wallace Boulevard project in Tuscaloosa, Alabama



groups, environmental groups, tribal communities, economic development interests, and EJ groups.

SOCIAL MEDIA

As technology emerges, social media is more useful than ever in communicating a message to a targeted group of people. Social media analytics provide a quantitative means to measure the reach and interaction of a posted message. These tools can be useful during the public engagement process, allowing organizations to adjust messaging to make sure the right message reaches the right audience. The various available social media channels (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) possess different qualities that can be beneficial to the public engagement process. Although promoted discussion on social media should be documented to the extent practicable, it can be difficult to capture public feedback via social media. Therefore, it is important to focus social media efforts on educational messaging and announcements while utilizing other methods to obtain and respond to public comments.

ALDOT does not currently have access to ongoing social media sites. As a result, ALDOT may rely on MPOs, non-MPOs, and other organizations to post information about transportation plans, proposed updates, and opportunities for public comment on their social media sites.

SURVEYS

Distributed surveys offer an organized way to obtain public feedback. User-friendly, online survey platforms (e.g., Survey Monkey, Survey123, Microsoft Forms) provide an easy way for citizens to engage in transportation planning efforts. Surveys can be published digitally or distributed by hard copy, making the feedback method universal to the needs of participants. In the event a virtual engagement occurrence complements an in-person engagement activity, the same survey can be used uniformly to gather easily documented feedback. Surveys can also be used to find out demographic information from your engagement participants or contact list members to aid in further defining the audience.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings are held in locations that are convenient and accessible to the communities within the study area. These meetings are organized with the assistance of the non-MPOs, MPOs, and ALDOT region offices, as appropriate. Meeting locations are chosen to provide access to the broadest sector of citizens and, where possible, are accessible by transit. Public meetings can utilize live video streaming and/or virtual meeting platforms to complement in-person meetings and increase audience reach and participation. There may also be times when virtual meetings are used in lieu of public meetings.

MEDIA OUTREACH

To ensure the widest possible public participation, project activities, findings and conclusions, and meeting schedules may be disseminated through the general media across the state. Potential media outlets include television, radio, newspapers, available media outlets, and/or the internet. Dissemination methods include formal notices, press releases, newsworthy events, public service announcements,

mailings, e-mail, and/or advertisements. Establishing a relationship with various local media representatives and understanding their processes is useful in confirming consistent media strategies and communicating intended messages. Developing these relationships allows media representatives to know who to contact directly if they need an expert opinion on the issue or talking points for a story. Many times, local media representatives are willing to share distribution lists and provide advertising analytics to complement audience demographic research. ALDOT's Media and Community Relations Bureau and public information officers, along with the MPOs and non-MPOs, can work together to reach the public. **Appendix F: ALDOT Media Relations and Communication Contacts** provides contact information for these individuals.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS

Public information materials are a key component of the public involvement process. These materials are geared to the public and summarize the planning process in layman's terms. Materials are sent to individuals on the distribution list and/or made available at public meetings and online. Materials may include, but are not limited to, brochures, fact sheets, PowerPoint slides, summary reports, videos, display boards, mapping, and comment forms. In addition, when trying to reach targeted areas, project signs, enhanced flyers, and community-specific mailings/postcards are effective ways to generate public interest. Materials should be written in simple, easy-to-read language and be translated into multiple languages, if applicable. Published materials should, at a minimum, include a description of the plan or project, the purpose of the plan or project, notable coordination with other state, regional, and local plans, as appropriate, the status of projects, and opportunities for public engagement.

ALDOT WEBSITE

ALDOT's website includes information on formal planning documents. Visitors can submit comments and questions online, see upcoming public involvement meetings, view public meeting information/materials, and request to be added to mailing lists at www.ALDOTInvolved.com for projects being evaluated as part of ALDOT's environmental process and at the STIP webpage for STIP projects. In addition, ALDOT's website contains publications and public feedback summaries. ALDOT monitors the number of individuals who visit the website and updates it with new information as necessary.

Public Involvement Toolbox

Over the last two decades, the use of technology to communicate with the public has increased significantly. People rely heavily on their cell phones and computers to receive and share information. As a result, techniques to engage the public have evolved. Additionally, there is a need for organizations to be able to host meetings using virtual tools in lieu of, or in addition to, in-person meetings.

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316, the public must be given:

- Adequate public notice of public participation activities
- Opportunities to review and comment at key decision points
- Multiple, accessible participation formats, including electronic and in-person

Public outreach is not a "one-size-fits-all" strategy. As a result, tools to reach and engage the public should be identified based on the target audience and the goals of public involvement. Organizations are encouraged to evaluate what is effective and what is not effective and adjust accordingly (see **Chapter 4: Documenting and Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Involvement**).

The toolbox shown in **Figure 5** (which spans the next four pages) contains a list of outreach techniques and tools that may be used. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather to identify primary tools that have been used effectively and successfully throughout the state. The toolbox also includes tools that may be considered for use in future public involvement activities. This list will continue to evolve and be updated as appropriate. Examples of documents referenced in the toolbox are included in **Appendix G: Sample Forms and Other Document Examples**.

Figure 5: ALDOT Public Involvement Toolbox—Sample Tools to Consider for Each Step of the ALDOT Public Involvement Process

ALDOT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOLBOX

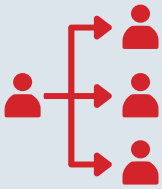
ALDOT Public Involvement Process Steps	Sample Tools to Consider
1 Define **STUDY AREA** and identify target audience **Engagement Milestone:** Market Research	Study Scope or Plan Purpose
2 Establish public involvement **TIMELINE AND OUTREACH GOALS** **Engagement Milestone:** Engagement Forecasting	Public Involvement Timeline Example**
3 Initiate organized **ADVISORY GROUP** if applicable **Engagement Milestone:** Advisory Groups	Online/On-Site Surveys
4 Provide adequate **PUBLIC NOTICE** of public involvement activities **Engagement Milestone:** Advertising Methods	Road Signs Newspaper Press Release

**Appendix G: Sample Forms and Other Document Examples contains examples and templates referenced in this toolbox

Sample Tools to Consider

U.S. Census Data

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Tools



Target Audience List*

Engagement Goals Evaluation Template**

Local Events for Outreach

Virtual Meeting Platforms

Example Virtual Meeting Platforms (Will DIffer By Agency)

Zoom

GoToMeeting

Microsoft Teams

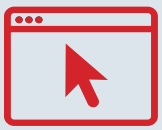
WebEx

Informational Materials

Direct Mail Letter Notices (Target Audience List)

TV*

Radio*



Website

E-mail (On-Going)

Local Social Media

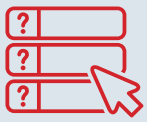
*Where Feasible

ALDOT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOLBOX

ALDOT Public Involvement Process Steps	Sample Tools to Consider
5 Hold regional PUBLIC INPUT MEETINGS **Engagement Milestone:** In-Person, Virtual, and Hybrid (Combination) Meetings	Public Meeting Agenda and Sign-In Sheet Template** Powerpoint Presentation Virtual Meeting Platforms
6 Distribute DRAFT DOCUMENT for review and provide adequate public notice **Engagement Milestone:** Distribution Methods for Accessible Public Review	Website E-mail
7 Collect PUBLIC COMMENTS for incorporation into final plan **Engagement Milestone:** Methods for Gathering Public Input	Public comments can be recorded**
8 Publish and distribute the FINAL DOCUMENT **Engagement Milestone:** Distribution Methods	Website E-mail
9 EVALUATE and document the CONDUCTED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT and the public involvement process **Engagement Milestone:** Prepare Public Involvement Summary Report	

**Appendix G: Sample Forms and Other Document Examples contains examples and templates referenced in this toolbox

Sample Tools to Consider



Online/On-Site Surveys

Live Recordings

Poster Session

Informational Materials

Feedback/ Comment Form Template**

Outdoor Meetings

Drive-In Meetings

Individual Meetings

Future consideration by ALDOT

Link via Local Social Media

Phone Call Request for Physical Copies

MPO, RPO, ALDOT Offices and Other Physical Locations*

Translation may be available

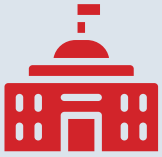
E-mail

Telephone

Direct Mail

Link via Local Social Media

Telephone



MPO, RPO, and ALDOT Offices*

Physical Locations in Community*

Engagement Goals Evaluation Template**

Summary Report Checklist

*Where Feasible

How Can the Public Engage in the Transportation Planning Process?

Statewide

ALDOT is committed to providing accessible opportunities for the public to engage and provide input during the transportation planning process. ALDOT is federally required to maintain a public participation/involvement plan that details how the public can engage and provide feedback. There are a variety of opportunities readily available for Alabamians to engage in transportation planning. Some of these opportunities include online surveys, attendance at public open houses, contacting statewide planning coordinators, and staying informed on ALDOT's engagement and planning efforts.

Often, issues arise that lead to a lack in public participation. Issues can include lack of transportation access to in-person events or the lack of reliable access to a computer, smartphone, or the internet. Public agencies have identified useful communication channels to ensure that every citizen that would like to be heard can be. As technology has emerged and social trends have allowed for messaging and collaboration via the internet and call-in communications, agencies are not only able to provide a variety of ways for community members to provide feedback, but it has also allowed state agencies to get more meaningful input from a wider variety of state residents.

Local Level

At the local level, community members engage in transportation planning through their designated MPO, RPC, or RPO (see **Figure 6**). Contact information for these organizations can be found in **Appendix H: Contact Information for MPOs, RPCs, and RPOs**. Every MPO is federally required to maintain a public participation/involvement plan that details how the public can engage and provide feedback on local transportation projects. RPCs and RPOs often rely on the statewide PIP to guide and conduct public outreach activities.

Several avenues exist in which the public can engage in local level transportation planning. First, members of the public who have interest in engaging at the local level can start by staying educated and aware of local planning efforts. Many MPOs' coordination consists of communication with their community members, public officials, and area groups through an organized distribution list where they can make announcements, distribute surveys and newsletters, and/or educate the public on planning practices and upcoming projects. Depending on the project, MPOs may utilize diverse types of engagement opportunities for the public to provide feedback. Typically, these practices can include in-person meetings with video or call-in capabilities, online surveys, and pop-up engagement events, among others. The local Citizen Advisory Committees' and Technical Advisory Committees' meetings are open to the public, to ensure that they are informed and their feedback is incorporated into the transportation planning process. The groups also serve as an advisory to the MPO Policy Board meetings where the decisions are made.

How Can Citizens Gain Assistance in Getting Involved in Public Engagement?

ALDOT Accommodation Procedures: Title VI, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Environmental Justice (EJ), and ADA

As a recipient of federal funding, ALDOT is required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin—to provide meaningful access to federal funded programs for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP); address environmental justice concerns in low-income and minority communities (EJ); and ensure equal opportunity for persons with disabilities (ADA). ALDOT relies on various federal regulations and statutes from FHWA and FTA to help guide its public participation activities.

For more information on the Title VI services and resources offered by ALDOT's Title VI Program, please refer to the 2020 Update to ALDOT's Title VI Goals and Accomplishments Report and the 2021 Update to ALDOT's Title VI Implementation Plan, as well as **Appendix B: Federal and State Regulations.**

Figure 6: Map of Alabama's 14 MPOs and 12 RPCs/RPOs

RC
Regional Commission

RPDC
Regional Planning and Development Commission

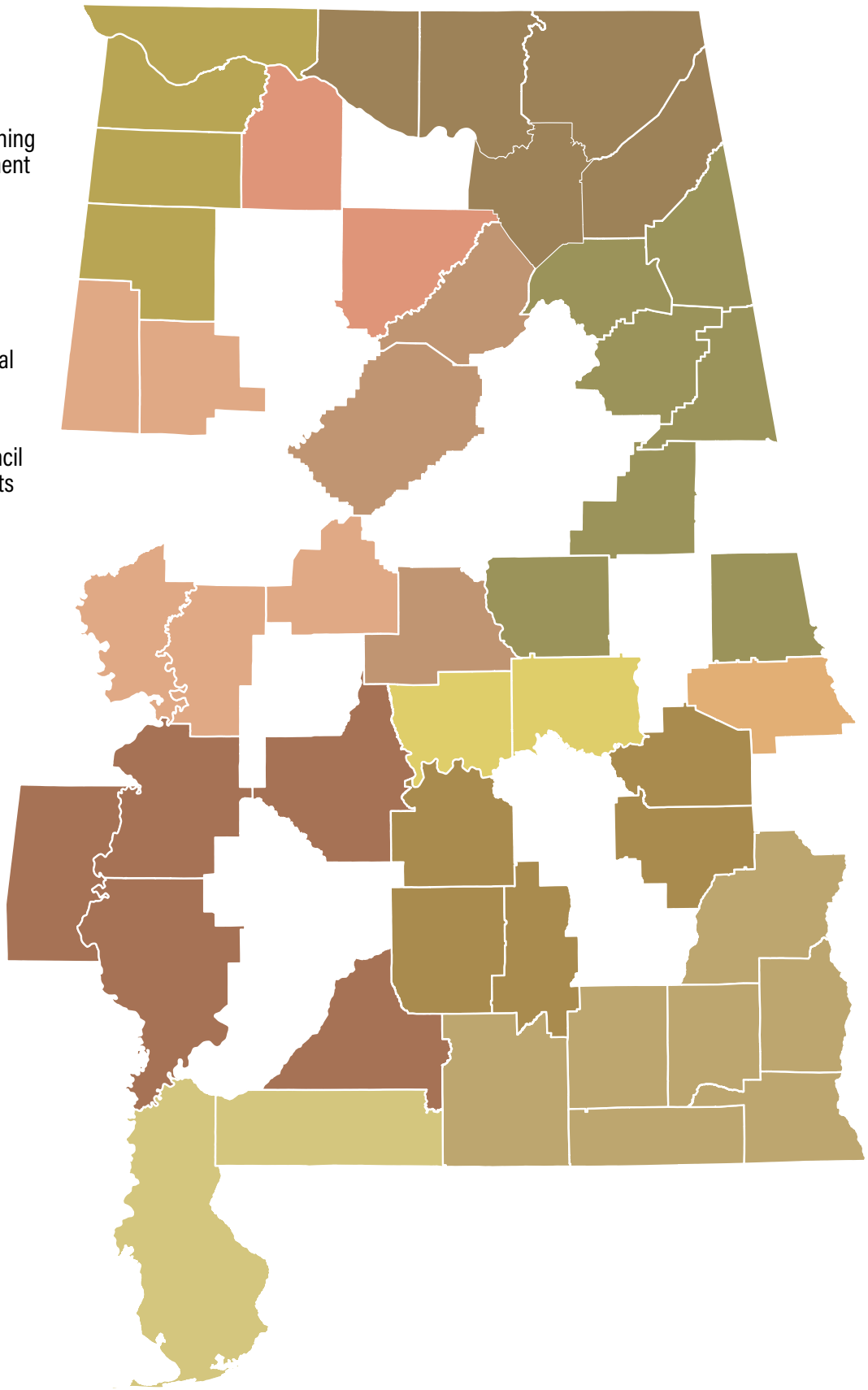
COG
Council of Governments

CLG
Council of Local Governments

RCG
Regional Council of Governments

RPC
Regional Planning Commission

DC
Development Commission



APPENDIX A
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS

Glossary of Acronyms

ADA
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

ALDOT
Alabama Department of Transportation

CLG
Council of Local Governments

COG
Council of Governments

DC
Development Commission

DOT
Department of Transportation

FHWA
Federal Highway Administration

FTA
Federal Transit Administration

LEP
Limited English Proficiency

LRTP
Long-Range Transportation Plan

NEPA
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

PIP
Public Involvement Plan

PPP
Public Participation Plan

RC
Regional Commission

RCG
Regional Council of Governments

RPC
Regional Planning Commission

RPO
Rural Planning Organization

RPDC
Regional Planning and Development Commission

SAG
Stakeholder Advisory Group

TPO
Transportation Planning Organization

Glossary of Terms

Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
The AIAC represents more than 38,000 American Indian families who are residents of the State of Alabama. The AIAC serves as a liaison between the various government departments and tribal communities of Alabama. As an advocate for Indian citizens in Alabama, the AIAC works with state agencies, including ALDOT, to ensure Indian tribes receive equitable consideration in the allocation of resources to address needs within tribal communities.

Alabama League of Municipalities
The Alabama League of Municipalities is a non-partisan association of nearly 450 incorporated cities and towns in the state. The League serves as the primary legislative advocate for Alabama's municipalities. The League's Standing Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure, and Communication reviews and recommends policies on transportation and infrastructure programs throughout the state, including transportation revenue sources and allocations, which are identified in the SWTP and STIP.

Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA)
The ACCA was formed in 1929 to serve as an educational, technical, legal, legislative, and public policy resource for all 67 counties in Alabama. Every county commission in the state is a member of the ACCA. The ACCA includes five affiliate organizations comprised of county employees. These affiliate organizations include the Association of County Engineers (ACEA). The roles of the ACEA include promoting sound road and bridge infrastructure on county roads throughout Alabama and fostering cooperation between the counties and ALDOT. ALDOT works closely with the ACCA and ACEA to identify transportation needs and allocate resources to address those needs as part of the transportation planning process.

Association of County Engineers of Alabama
The ACEA was established to promote sound road and bridge infrastructure along county roads across Alabama through an exchange of ideas among engineering professionals and by maintaining cooperation between the Alabama counties and ALDOT. The ACEA is comprised of County Engineers and Assistant County Engineers from all of Alabama's 67 counties.

Environmental Justice (EJ)
The U.S. Department of Transportation defines environmental justice (EJ) as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, ethnicity, income, national origin, or educational level with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no population, due to policy or economic disempowerment, is forced to bear a disproportionate burden of the negative human health and environmental impacts, including social and economic effects, resulting from transportation decisions, programs and policies made, implemented, and enforced at the federal, state, local, or tribal level.

Local Planning Agencies (LPAs)
LPAs include Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), which are federally-mandated and funded organizations that guide regional cooperation in transportation planning and are required in urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000. LPAs also include Non-Metropolitan Planning Organizations (non-MPOs), consisting of Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), and Councils of Government (COGs), which assist ALDOT in identifying transportation needs in non-urbanized areas (i.e., areas with populations of fewer than 50,000).

Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP)

The SWTP is a long-range, macro-level assessment of the state's transportation system network. It summarizes the system's current conditions and identifies its needs and priorities for a minimum of 20 years. It is a multimodal plan that evaluates all modes of passenger and freight transportation—roadways and bridges, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, rail, aviation, and waterways. It considers the extent of modal coverage and connectivity across the entire state and between modes.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

Alabama's 14 MPOs are responsible for preparing long-range and short-term transportation plans for urbanized areas (populations of 50,000 or more) and coordinating with ALDOT to ensure these plans are included in statewide planning documents. MPOs work with other LPAs (i.e., counties, municipalities, and transit providers) to identify, prioritize, and fund transportation needs in urban areas.

Non-Metropolitan Planning Organizations (Non-MPOs)

Responsible for working with local governments, elected officials, and citizens in non-urbanized areas to identify region-wide transportation needs and coordinate with ALDOT to incorporate projects into statewide transportation plans. Non-MPOs may include Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), and/or Councils of Governments (COGs). Non-MPOs work with other LPAs (i.e., counties, towns, and rural transit providers) to identify, prioritize, and fund transportation projects in rural areas.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The STIP is a federally mandated four-year funding and scheduling document for surface transportation projects, including roads, highways, pedestrian trails, bicycle facilities, bridge facilities, and transit projects in Alabama. The program serves as a statewide, prioritized listing of transportation projects to be implemented over the next four years. A project must be included in the STIP in order to receive federal and state funds. The STIP must be consistent with the statewide transportation plan and transportation plans developed by MPOs, RPOs, and RPCs.

Statewide Transportation Planning

Statewide transportation planning and programming considers all transportation modes important to the public and the statewide system. The planning process establishes goals and ranks transportation needs for the entire state.

Transportation Programming

Transportation programming chooses and funds projects that meet the needs of the statewide plans and priorities.

Transportation Stakeholders

A broad group of transportation related entities including public transportation employees, public ports operators, freight shippers, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators), users of public transportation, users of pedestrian walkways, users of bicycle transportation facilities, providers of freight transportation services, representatives of individuals with disabilities, federally-recognized Tribes with ancestral ties to Alabama, and other interested parties.

APPENDIX B
FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS

The Alabama Department of Transportation follows and upholds the federal and state regulations contained in this appendix, which ensure non-discriminatory practices are utilized while helping to determine when and how to include public involvement in the planning process. The following federal and state regulations are briefly summarized with additional links provided for readers to obtain a more complete understanding of the laws associated with public involvement.

For more information, please refer to the overview of relevant **Federal Requirements for Public Involvement in the Transportation Planning Process** (on pages 29-30 of this document).

Federal Environmental and Non-discriminatory Statutes

» National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

- FHWA: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/federal-aidessentials/catmod.cfm?id=62.

» NEPA of 1970

- Citizen's Guide to NEPA: https://ceq.doe.gov/docs/get-involved/Citizens_Guide_Dec07.pdf
- ALDOT: https://www.dot.state.al.us/dsweb/divped/EnvironmentalCoordination/index.html

» Clean Air Act of 1970

- EPA: https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-air-act

» Clean Water Act of 1972

- EPA: https://www.epa.gov/cwa-404/overview-clean-water-act-section-404

» Age Discrimination Act of 1975

- U.S. Department of Labor: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/regulatory/statutes/age-discrimination-act

» Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division: http://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm

» Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

- U.S. Department of Justice: https://www.justice.gov/crt/fcs/TitleVI-Overview
- ALDOT Title VI Administration: https://www.dot.state.al.us/cboweb/ExternalProgramsSection.html

» Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987

- U.S. Congress: https://www.congress.gov/bill/100th-congress/senate-bill/557

Federal Transportation Statutes

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005 | (Public Law 109-59)

SAFETEA-LU promotes more efficient and effective federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving state and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities. Areas of focus include improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, protecting the environment, and laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges. An MPO is required to develop a participation plan in coordination with interested parties as a way for all parties to comment. The participation plan will be carried out through public meetings. These meetings must be conducted at convenient and accessible locations at convenient times; employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and make public information available in an electronically accessible format. The participation plan is to be published and made available electronically. Users of multimodal transportation systems and disabled individuals are to be included in public participation and the planning process.

For more information, follow this link to FHWA website.

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) of 2012 | (Public Law 112-141)

MAP-21 creates a streamlined and performance-based surface transportation program and builds on many of the federal highway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian programs and policies. MAP-21 is the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005. The Act provides needed funds and transforms the policy and programmatic framework for investments to guide the growth and development of the country's transportation infrastructure and challenges faced by the transportation system. These challenges include improving safety, maintaining infrastructure condition, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency of the system and freight movement, protecting the environment, and reducing delays in project delivery.

MAP-21 ensures public involvement remains a hallmark of the transportation planning process. MAP-21 requires that interested parties be given a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed project plans, public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times, and public information is available in a variety of accessible formats and means.

For more information, follow this link to FHWA website.

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015 | (Public Law 114-94)

The FAST Act is the first federal law in the last decade to provide long-term funding for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. This includes funding for highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, research, technology, statistics programs, and freight projects. The FAST Act includes provisions from MAP-21 and both supports and enhances these reforms, including making public involvement a hallmark of the planning process.

For more information, follow this link to FHWA website.

Federal Regulations

FHWA

Title 23 Code of Sections 109, 129, 134, 135

These sections outline the role of highways as defined in the United States Code. Specific focus includes federal aid highways, other highways, general provisions, highway safety, research/technology/education, and infrastructure finance.

Section 109(h): Ensures that possible adverse human and natural effects relating to any federally-aided system or project be considered and final decisions be made in the best overall public interest.

Section 128: Any state transportation department submitting plans for a federally-aided project or system is required to hold public hearings and to certify that those public hearings have been held. The focus of the public hearings should be to consider the economic and social effects of location, the impact on the environment, and consistency with the goals/objectives of the planning efforts (as defined earlier in the project development process) and the community.

Section 134: Requires public participation by interested parties in the development of statewide and metropolitan transportation planning.

Section 135: Requires public participation by interested parties in the development of statewide and nonmetropolitan transportation planning.

For more information, follow this link to FHWA website.

Title 23 Code of Section 450

This section outlines the current regulations of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and FHWA, USDOT issued under the CFR. Specific focus includes general management and administration, payment procedures, civil rights, national highway institute, planning and research, transportation infrastructure management, engineering and traffic operations, right-of-way and environment, public

transportation, highway safety, federal land highways, procedures and guidelines for state highway safety programs, transfer and sanction programs, incentive grant criteria (various), and various procedures for participating in and receiving information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Section 450.324: In carrying out the statewide transportation planning process, including development of the LRTP and the STIP, the state shall develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points.

FTA

49 USC 5303 – Metropolitan Planning & 49 USC 5304 – Statewide Planning

This section provides funding and procedural requirements for multimodal transportation planning in metropolitan areas and states. Planning needs to be cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive, resulting in long-range plans and short-range programs reflecting transportation investment priorities. Federal planning funds are first apportioned to state DOTs. State DOTs then allocate planning funding to MPOs.

For more information, follow this link to FTA website.

ALDOT Policies and Regulations

Alabama Open Meetings Act | AL Code § 36-25A-1 (2016)

The new Open Meetings Act, which replaces the old "Sunshine Law," provides the public with greater access to their Alabama state and local government. This law guarantees that Alabama's citizens have open access to agencies, boards, commissions, and other governmental bodies which conduct the people's business.

State of Alabama: https://www.openmeetings.alabama.gov/generalpublic/publicdefault.aspx

(a) It is the policy of this state that the deliberative process of governmental bodies shall be open to the public during meetings as defined in Section 36-25A-2(6). Except for executive sessions permitted in Section 36-25A-7(a) or as otherwise expressly provided by other federal or state laws or statutes, all meetings of a governmental body shall be open to the public and no meetings of a governmental body may be held without providing notice pursuant to the requirements of Section 36-25A-3. No executive sessions are required by this chapter to be held under any circumstances. Serial meetings or electronic communications shall not be utilized to circumvent any of the provisions of this chapter. (b) This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Alabama Open Meetings Act."

ALDOT Open Records Request Form: https://www.dot.state.al.us/pdf/AlabamaOpenRecordsRequestForm.pdf

APPENDIX C

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Overview

A stakeholder outreach survey was conducted to understand how stakeholders throughout the State of Alabama utilize the ALDOT Public Involvement Plan. Thirty-eight (38) stakeholders responded to the survey, representing all fourteen (14) MPOs, all twelve (12) RPOs/RPCs, all five (5) ALDOT Regions, and two (2) FHWA staff.

The results from the stakeholder outreach survey are summarized below.

What approaches (i.e., local social media, virtual public engagement, newsletters, etc.) have you used to conduct public outreach, both before and throughout the current pandemic situation?

Public notices are disseminated through newspaper ads, local social media, newsletters, direct e-mail, letters, flyers, roadway signs, television, radio, and postcard campaigns for public outreach both before & throughout the current pandemic situation. Virtual public meetings (i.e. Zoom and Microsoft Teams) and interactive online maps were added (to the above list) and used throughout the current pandemic situation.

Do you maintain a social media page?

Most of the respondents have a Facebook page. Some use Twitter and Instagram.

Social Media Platform	Number of Mentions
Facebook	20
Twitter	10
Website	5
Instagram	4
Zoom	2
LinkedIn	1
WebEx	1
None	10

What problems have you experienced with public involvement (including within your organization)?

The number one problem for all of the respondents was lack of participation.

Do you have documented guidance on how to conduct your public involvement meetings? When and/or how often does the documented guidance get updated?

All of the respondents have either a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) or a Public Participation Plan (PPP). However, many of the plans have not been updated recently, while a few are updated on an annual basis.

What key interest groups must be included in the stakeholder database (i.e., low income, minority groups, environmental, health & human service organizations, municipal associations, local officials, business leaders, research professionals, transportation planners, community leaders, etc.)?

The majority of respondents that conduct public outreach agreed that all of the key interest groups should be included in the stakeholder database.

How do you measure successful public involvement or evaluate the public involvement process?

Some of the respondents had a very good evaluation process, while others had no evaluation process. A suggestion was made to set goals in public outreach and then track those goals. This can be different for each project.

Do you have documented guidance on how to conduct your public involvement?

Does your organization maintain a list of accessible meeting locations for your area? Have you used non-traditional meeting places and events?

Twenty (20) respondents said they have documented guidance on how to conduct public involvement and use either guidance from the ALDOT website, the ALDOT PIP, the PIP for the Environmental Process, or the MPO/RPO's own public participation plan.

Most respondents did not maintain a list of accessible meeting locations, some use local municipal governments which are always ADA compliant, and a few maintained lists of accessible meeting locations either in a personal database or in the MPO/RPO's public participation plan. Non-traditional meeting places mentioned by respondents include:

- Museums
- Town halls
- Virtual meetings
- Botanical gardens
- Bass Pro Shops meeting rooms
- Banks
- Five Rivers Resource Center
- Festivals
- Transit hubs
- Parks
- Fire stations
- Parking lots
- Utility services facilities
- Places of worship
- Schools
- Libraries
- Socially-distanced and outside
- Hybrid (virtual/in-person) meetings

What problems have you experienced with public involvement (including within your organization)? How would you like to see these problems addressed? How can the public involvement process be improved?

Most respondents (19) cited lack of interest from the public as the number one problem experienced with public involvement. Since switching to virtual meetings, however, some respondents have turned to technology as a means to help the public involvement process occur "early and often," hoping it will attract and engage more people to participate in public meetings and provide input. Online social media and virtual public meeting platforms were cited seven (7) times as the ideal path forward to improve public involvement. One MPO mentioned that since the pandemic began, and they have switched to virtual public meetings, participation levels have increased.

As for problems to address, three (3) respondents cited issues related to the need for additional training to ensure that staff and personnel have the proper information to give the public when the need arises. Staff should also understand when to properly defer information requests to a higher authority or later date when more detailed information is available. Three (3) respondents cited issues with having consistent, adequate, ADA accessible meeting spaces with enough signage to properly direct visitors to the physical meeting location. Additionally, lack of a central location large enough for all necessary public meetings was deemed problematic since the constant moving of meeting locations causes confusion and inconsistent attendance.

Please provide any additional comments you may have.

- There needs to be a more well-defined process for advertising and marketing an upcoming public involvement meeting. Options for gathering

public involvement should include online public involvement that doesn't require the public to attend an in-person event. There should be a written process for securing paid advertising for an upcoming public involvement (who purchases the ads, what should be included in the ad, and how to pay for the ads).

- ALDOT Transit needs to adopt new processes to reach out to the public and to conduct meetings that are current with today's media outlets.
- Sharing experiences, ideas, and methods throughout ALDOT regions could help in the improvement process for public involvement.
- Since 2019, and due to recent hiring changes, our RPO is re-examining how processes have been handled in the past and are seeking examples of more efficient and forward-thinking ways to handle these same processes in order to provide the maximum benefit of our services to our region.
- We are striving to make our information easier to understand for the general public. We have to remember that even our board members are not as familiar with our terminology as we are.
- This is slightly off topic. If an MPO is unable to meet for reasons beyond the MPO's control, what are the consequences for the items that would be adopted at that meeting? If a UPWP is unable to be adopted, can planning funds still be spent until the next meeting? If a Long-Range Plan is unable to be adopted, can projects still be added to the TIP until the next meeting? If a TIP resolution is unable to be adopted, can that project still make a letting? The answer might be different for a pandemic vs. a lack of quorum. Finally, does the MPO have to re-advertise if a meeting has to be canceled for any reason? These are questions that we would like to have access to when needed.

APPENDIX D
REFERENCES TO OTHER PLANS

ALDOT Resources and Plans

1. Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) Fact Sheet
2. Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Brochure
3. Title VI Goals & Accomplishment Report
4. Title VI Implementation Plan
5. Transit Section's State Management Plan
6. Public Involvement Plan for the Environmental Process

MPO & RPC/RPO PIPs

1. Birmingham MPO (Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham) 2014 Public Participation Plan
2. Calhoun Area MPO (East Alabama RPDC) 2019 Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning
3. Columbus-Phenix City 2019-2022 Public Participation Plan
4. Eastern Shore MPO 2018 Public Participation Plan
5. Southeast Wiregrass Area MPO 2013 Public Participation Plan
6. Gadsden/Etowah MPO 2013 Public Participation Plan
7. Florida-Alabama TPO 2020 Public Participation Plan
8. Huntsville Metropolitan MPO 2018 Public Participation Plan
9. Mobile MPO (South Alabama RPC) 2021 Public Participation Plan
10. Montgomery MPO 2013 Public Participation Plan
11. Shoals Area MPO (Northwest Alabama Council of Governments) 2019 Public Participation Plan
12. Tuscaloosa Area MPO 2018 Public Involvement Plan
13. Auburn-Opelika MPO FY2020-2023 Public Participation Plan
14. Lee and Russell County RPO 2016 Public Involvement Plan
15. Southeast Alabama RPO 2008 Public Involvement Plan
16. North-Central Alabama RPO 2016 Public Participation Plan

APPENDIX E

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND PROCESSES GUIDE

PLAN	LONG-RANGE STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (SWTP)		STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP) / TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)		PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN (PIP) / PUBLIC PARTICIPARTION PLAN (PPP)	
AGENCY	ALDOT	MPO	ALDOT	MPO	ALDOT	MPO
Purpose	Establish long term vision, goals, and objectives		List transportation projects that are financially constrained		Identify public outreach goals and strategies, and evaluation metrics	
Update Frequency	Updated every 4 years/ amendments as necessary		Updated every 4 years/ amendments as necessary		Updated as necessary	
Engage Audience at Key Decision Points*	Stakeholders & General Public		Stakeholders & General Public		Stakeholders & General Public	
COMMENT PERIODS						
Update Frequency	Full updates required every 4 years		Full updates required every 4 years		45-day public review (as required by federal law)	
Amendments	21-day period to provide comments (online services only)	As specified in each MPO's PPP	21-day period to provide comments (online services only)	As specified in each MPO's PPP		
Applicable Federal Laws Reference	23 CFR 450.210 (State); 49 USC 5304 (State) 23 CFR 450.316 (MPO); 49 USC 5303 (MPO)					

*Stakeholder and general public engagement requirements are subject to change. Specific key decision points requiring stakeholder engagement may vary depending on the plan, type of update or revision, and current federal regulations.

APPENDIX F

ALDOT MEDIA RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION CONTACTS

Media and Community Relations Bureau

Central Office: 1409 Coliseum Boulevard, Montgomery, Alabama 36110

Tony Harris
Bureau Chief and Government Relations Manager
334.242.6552
harrist@dot.state.al.us

Allison Green
Marketing and Communication Specialist, Drive Safe Alabama Coordinator
334.353.6534
greena@dot.state.al.us

Haley Ansley
Public Information Officer
334.242.6729
ansleyh@dot.state.al.us

Josh Philips
Public Information Officer
334.242.6730
phillipsjo@dot.state.al.us

Amanda Deem
Public Information Officer
334.242.6963
deema@dot.state.al.us

Regional Public Information Officers

North Region: 1525 Perimeter Parkway Huntsville, Alabama 35086

Seth Burkett
Public Information Officer
256.505.4964
burketts@dot.state.al.us

Southwest Region: 1701 I-65 West Service Road North Mobile, Alabama 36618

Katelyn Turner
Public Information Officer
251.470.8375
turnerke@dot.state.al.us

West Central Region: 100 Marina Drive Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35406

John McWilliams
Public Information Officer
205.562.3115
mcwilliamsj@dot.state.al.us

Southeast Region: 100 Capitol Commerce Boulevard, Building B, Suite 210, Montgomery, Alabama 36117

Brantley Kirk
Public Information Officer
334.353.6862
kirkb@dot.state.al.us

East Central Region: 100 Corporate Parkway, Suite 450, Hoover, Alabama 35242

Linda Crockett
Public Information Officer
205.327.4973
crockettl@dot.state.al.us

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE FORMS AND OTHER DOCUMENT EXAMPLES

Sample Public Notice

ALABAMA 2040 STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is holding the second round of public and stakeholder meetings for the Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) update. The SWTP summarizes the current conditions of Alabama's transportation system and its needs and priorities for the next 25 years. It addresses all modes of travel for passengers and freight—roadways and bridges, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, rail, aviation, and waterways. It identifies system needs, evaluates investments in infrastructure and maintenance, and compares historic and anticipated funding levels against needs. The resulting plan establishes the programs, policies, and strategies that will be the focus of the State's efforts through 2040.

Learn about the assessments and share your thoughts on Alabama's transportation priorities through 2040.

Open House 5:00-6:30 pm; Presentation at 5:30 pm

Mobile — **Tuesday, April 4, 2017**
ALDOT Southwest Region Office
1701 I-65 W Service Rd N, Bldg T, Mobile 36618

Montgomery — **Tuesday, April 4, 2017**
ALDOT Southeast Region Montgomery Office
1525 Coliseum Blvd, Montgomery 36110

Hoover — **Thursday, April 6, 2017**
ALDOT East Central Region Office
100 Corporate Pkwy, Ste 450, Hoover 35242

Huntsville — **Thursday, April 13, 2017**
Top of Alabama Regional Council of Gov't
5075 Research Drive NW, Huntsville 35805

Tuscaloosa — **Tuesday, April 18, 2016**
ALDOT West Central Region Training Center
(Old Fire College)
2015 McFarland Blvd East, Tuscaloosa 35404

Meeting materials will present DRAFT policy recommendations and modal strategies, along with key findings from the needs assessment and funding analysis.

Come share your thoughts about Alabama's transportation priorities!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

ALDOT

(334) 242-6500 or

aldotstatewideplanning@dot.state.al.us

Sample Public Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DRAFT
STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – STIP

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) will hold public meetings to gather input regarding the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The meetings is scheduled for:

Wednesday, June 17, 2015
East Central Region – Birmingham Area Office
1020 Bankhead Highway – West
Birmingham, Alabama 35204
5:00pm to 7:00pm

The ALDOT is seeking public comments on the proposed STIP, which includes a listing of specific transportation projects that will be funded during the next four years.

Each meeting will be held in an open house format. Displays and information, along with a short presentation, will be included to explain the requirements to have a STIP. ALDOT staff will be available to discuss planning efforts and answer questions.

Persons with disabilities should contact Birmingham Area Office, (205) 581-5725 (Mrs. Sandra F. P. Bonner) to request special assistance. Please make this request at least one week prior to the meeting and specify the type of assistance needed.

The *DRAFT* STIP 2016 – 2019 will be available for review at the Birmingham Are Office, and the District Offices in Oneonta and Calera.

Comments will be accepted until July 21, 2015, and should be forwarded to:

State Office Engineer
Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Blvd.
Montgomery, Alabama 36110

OR:

Submit your comments electronically by going to ALDOT's web page: www.dot.state.al.us

Click on: *DRAFT 2016-2019 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program*

Sample News Release

NEWS RELEASE

For Additional Information Contact:

Robert B. Lake, Executive Director
West Alabama Regional Commission
4200 Highway 69 North, Suite 1
Northport, AL 35473
(205) 333-2990 * FAX (205) 333-2713

December 18, 2014

The West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO) will hold six public meetings for the *Draft West Alabama Rural Planning Organization Public Involvement Plan (2015)*. The public meetings will be held at the following locations, dates, and times:

A. Bibb County – January 26, 2015, 6:00 p.m. - Brent City Hall, 22 1st Street, Brent, AL
B. Fayette County – January 20, 2015, 5:00 p.m. - Fayette County Commission Chamber, 103 1st Avenue NW, Fayette, AL
C. Greene County – January 29, 2015, 2:00 p.m. - James C. Poole Library, 219 Prairie Avenue, Eutaw, AL
D. Hale County – January 27, 2015, 5:00 p.m. - Bank of Moundville, 319 Market Street, Moundville, AL
E. Lamar County - January 22, 2015, 6:00 p.m. - Lamar County Commission Chamber, 44690 Highway 17, Vernon, AL
F. Pickens County – January 29, 2015, 9:00 a.m. - Pickens County Commission Chamber, 20 Phoenix Avenue, Carrollton, AL

The draft plan will be available for review from December 18, 2014 through February 8, 2015 at the West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC), 4200 Highway 69 North, Northport and at the WARC website (http://warc.info/transportation-planning/west-alabama-rpo/documents). Paper copies are also available by request.

The public meeting will include a formal review of the plan by the RPO staff and a question and answer session. Meeting attendees will be given an opportunity to complete comment forms.

The RPO is scheduled to adopt the plan at their February 13, 2015 meeting. Prior to adopting the plan, the RPO will review all comments from the public and make changes to the plan if warranted. If major revisions are required, the public will be given another opportunity to inspect the plan.

Comments can be submitted by postal mail (PIP 2010, West Alabama Regional Commission, P.O. Box 509, Northport, AL 35476), email (david.norris@westal.org), and FAX (205-333-2713). Comments will be accepted until February 8, 2015.

Anyone requiring special assistance to attend the meetings should contact the WARC no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. For **special assistance** call the WARC at 333-2990, ext. 213.

-End-

C-2

Sample Comment Form

Public and Stakeholder Meeting
Information Sheet
Alabama 2040 Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP)
April 2017

Welcome! Thank you for coming to the second round of SWTP meetings this evening. Please take your time viewing the displays placed around the room. Study Team members are available to answer your questions or provide additional information. A brief presentation will begin at 5:30 PM. A comment form is included in the handout materials. You may leave your completed form with a Study Team member tonight or submit it via email to the address noted on the form.

What is the Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP)?

The SWTP is a long-range, macro-level assessment of the state's transportation system network. It:

- Summarizes current transportation system conditions, and identifies needs and priorities for the next 25 years.
- Assesses all modes of passenger and freight transportation—roadways and bridges, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, rail, aviation, and waterways.
- Considers which modes are in place and where, as well as how they connect across the state and with each other.
- Reviews investments in infrastructure and maintenance, and compares them to historical and anticipated funding levels.

The SWTP establishes the programs, policies, and strategies that will be the focus of the State's efforts through 2040.

- It *does not* provide a detailed assessment of transportation conditions within one specific region or for one particular mode of travel. Those activities are carried out by urban and rural area regional organizations across the state or other bureaus within ALDOT.
- It also *does not* include a detailed listing of projects. The short-term State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) provides a prioritized list of projects; it has a four-year horizon and is updated annually. *More information on the STIP can be found online at: https://cpmsapps.dot.state.al.us/OfficeEngineer/Plan/Statewide.*

How and when can I review the Draft Plan document?

The draft Final Report for the SWTP will be available in May for public review and comment. It will be posted under the "Information and Deliverables" section of the SWTP webpage at: **http://www.dot.state.al.us/oeweb/statewideTransportationPlan.html**.

If you provided your email address on the sign-in sheet tonight, you will be notified by email when the Draft Plan has been posted and is available for review. If you do not have or use email, please feel free to provide your mailing address and we will send notification by US Mail.

Sample Comment Form

Public and Stakeholder Meeting
Comment Form
Alabama 2040 Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP)
April 2017

Are there any topics you wanted to hear more information about?

What programs, policies, and/or initiatives are of particular importance to you?

NOTE: The SWTP does not provide a listing of projects. Any project-specific comments will be forwarded to the appropriate ALDOT or local staff.

Do you have any other comments, suggestions or guidance for us?

Please give this form to any Study Team member present at today's meeting.

Forms and additional comments can also be submitted via email to:
aldotstatewideplanning@dot.state.al.us

View SWTP materials (and the Draft Plan when available) at:

http://www.dot.state.al.us/oeweb/statewideTransportationPlan.html

For more information, please contact:
ALDOT Office Engineer, Planning Studies at (334) 242-6500

Sample Newsletter

Spring 2020 Edition

ROUNDABOUTS

THE RPCGB QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the new RPCGB "Regional Roundabouts" newsletter!

Regional Roundabouts is a new quarterly e-newsletter from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB). It is our way to share what we are doing for the member municipalities in the Greater Birmingham Region. In each newsletter we will highlight some of the exciting projects and initiatives the RPCGB is currently conducting, and let you know how you can take advantage of the many services that the RPCGB can offer!

Economic Development

RPCGB Annual Meeting is Postponed

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and CDC guidelines, the RPCGB Annual Meeting that was scheduled for April 16 at Vulcan Park has been postponed. We will advertise a new date when it is safe to hold larger gatherings. Please follow the news section of our website to stay up to date, and if you have questions please contact Jesslan Wilson at jwilson@rpcgb.org or 205-264-8417.

RPCGB writes successful grant for Birmingham-Jefferson Port Authority

RPCGB's Economic Development department assisted the Birmingham-Jefferson County Port Authority (BJCPA) pursue and write an Inland Port Grant from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). The awarded project will consist of constructing a 10,000-square-foot warehouse to increase storage capacity at the Lynn Port Terminal on the Black Warrior River. The $840,000 grant was announced February 24th. Click here to view the full announcement.

Current grant and funding opportunities

Economic Development Administration:

- *Public Works & Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs*- Due Date: Ongoing
- *Disaster Supplemental Assistance*- Due Date: Ongoing
- *Planning &Technical Assistance Programs*- Due Date: Ongoing

Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs:

- *Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)*- Due Date: June 12th, 2020

U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development:

- *Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Program*- Due Date: April 30th, 2020

Does your community or organization need grant assistance?

If your community or organization needs grant writing or application assistance, RPCGB is here to help. For questions about funding application assistance, please contact Jesslan Wilson, Economic Development Specialist, at jwilson@rpcgb.org or 205-264-8417.

Community Planning

The RPCGB Community Planning department provides community planning services for the member governments within the following counties: Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair and Walker Counties. The Community Planning department develops long-range plans to direct growth and

Sample Newsletter

TRANSPORTATION QUARTERLY

Volume 23 Issue 2 | A publication of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) | Spring 2018

News & Notes: MPO Commuter Study and Public Review

What is a Commuter Study?

Photo courtesy of Jeronimo Nisa and DecaturDaily.com

At the March MPO meeting, the Board approved funding for a Regional Commuter Study. How are Commuter Studies done? What type of Commuter Study will the Huntsville-Area MPO choose? Commuter studies identify existing and future commuter travel patterns. The Journey to Work numbers currently used in many MPO planning documents do not include federal employees. One out of every five workers in the MPO Study Area are federal employees. Anonymous cell phone data, like what's used to measure traffic congestion on Google Maps, might be used to more accurately visualize where our regional commuters are going and where they're coming from. The MPO's commuter study will inform an update to the MPO's Congestion Management Process, as well as the upcoming 2020-2023 TIP and the Year 2045 Transportation Plan. No new funding was necessary for this study. ALDOT informed the MPO that $51,800 of rollover planning funds were available from FY 2016 that could be used to fund such a study. The MPO approved this funding strategy and an RFP will go out this summer.

Public Review Needed!

The MPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP) will be open for public comment for 45 days: **April 11th through May 29th**. To see a physical copy of this plan, here's where to find it in the wild:

1. **Huntsville Planning Department**, City Hall, 2nd Floor, 308 Fountain Circle, Huntsville, AL 35801
2. **Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, Main Branch**, Second Floor Information Desk, 915 Monroe Street, Huntsville, AL 35801.

Of course, you can also find the plan on the MPO's website: **www.huntsvillempo.org**

You can also request your own copy to review by calling **256-427-5188.**

Huntsville Area **Metropolitan Planning Organization**

- ⇒ Bridges: replacements and new additions
- ⇒ Bicycle Lanes, Bicycle Plans, Bicycle options
- ⇒ Intersections: Plus additional lanes
- ⇒ Greenways: Plus more pedestrian options
- ⇒ Road Maintenance and Beautification
- ⇒ Interstates: Lane additions, on/off ramps
- ⇒ Public Transit: TRAM, Handi-ride and Shuttle
- ⇒ Redstone Arsenal and Research Park

Sample Public Involvement Summary Report

Public Involvement Report

for the

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Fiscal Years 2020-2023

West Alabama Rural Planning Organization (WARPO)

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

For information regarding this document, please contact
David A. Norris, Transportation Planning Director
West Alabama Regional Commission
4200 Highway 69 North
P.O. Box 509
Northport, AL 35476-0509
Telephone: 205-333-2990
FAX: 205-333-2713
Email: david.norris@westal.org

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For language assistance email david.norris@westal.org, subject line: "Interpreter".
Por idioma asistencia email david.norris@westal.org, línea de asunto: "Interpreter".

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Note: A full template for the Sample Public Involvement Summary Report is available upon request.

Sample Public Involvement Summary Report

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Note: A full template for the Sample Public Involvement Summary Report is available upon request.

Sample Public Involvement Summary Report

3.0 Attendance and Information Distribution

3.1 Summary

A total of 81 people attended the eight public meetings held in the West Alabama RPO (WARPO) planning area. The total includes local residents, elected officials, and government employees. The sign-in sheets for the meetings are provided in Appendix B.

Date	County	City/Town	Total	Local Attendance	ALDOT Staff	WARPO Staff
May 13, 2019	Bibb	Brent	12	9	2	1
May 14, 2019	Hale	Moundville	8	5	2	1
May 15, 2019	Pickens	Carrollton	7	4	2	1
May 15, 2019	Greene	Eutaw	7	4	2	1
May 16, 2019	Lamar	Vernon	10	7	2	1
May 28, 2019	Fayette	Fayette	6	3	2	1
May 30, 2019	Tuscaloosa	Northport	17	14	1	2
May 31, 2019	Tuscaloosa	Northport	14	10	2	2
		Totals	81	56	15	10

The meetings followed the same format. At the start of each meeting, the staff from the ALDOT Office Engineer Bureau, the Local Transportation Bureau, or the West Central Region described the STIP and the STIP development process. The second part of the meetings included a detailed review of the projects by the ALDOT West Central Region staff. Each meeting ended with a question and answer session, and a chance to complete the provided comment forms. The WARPO staff did not receive any comment forms during or after the public meetings.

3.2 Items Provided

Attendees of the meetings received a package of material and a comment form. The package included a description of the STIP, a key to the highway project list, the highway project list for the ALDOT West Central Region, a key to the transit project list the transit project list for the ALDOT West Central Region, a summary of the ALDOT performance measures, and the memorandum of understanding for STIP revisions.

Two display maps were also provided. One map was produced by the ALDOT Office Engineer Bureau and showed the location of the ALDOT sponsored STIP projects in the entire state. The WARPO staff presented a second map that displayed the location of all projects in the WARPO planning area.

Note: A full template for the Sample Public Involvement Summary Report is available upon request.

Sample Public Involvement Effectiveness Form

Florida-Alabama TPO
Transportation Planning Organization

Public Meeting Evaluation Questionnaire

To ensure better engagement of the communities in the transportation planning process, staff is requesting feedback on outreach efforts. Please provide insight for improving engagement efforts by completing the following questionnaire.

1. Do you feel the meeting was held at a convenient time?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If no, what would be a more convenient time to hold a meeting?

   _____

2. Do you feel the meeting was held in a convenient location?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If no, what where is a more convenient location to hold a meeting?

   _____

3. Were the techniques used for obtaining input valuable?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If no, what would be a more valuable way of obtaining input?

   _____

4. Were the techniques used for conveying project information valuable?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If no, what would be a more valuable way of conveying project information?

   _____

5. Would you like to receive meeting notifications and updates regarding transportation?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If yes, please provide your email: _____

Thank you for your input!

APPENDIX H

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MPOS, RPCS, AND RPOS

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

Auburn-Opelika MPO	
Executive Director:	Lisa Sandt
E-mail:	lsandt@lrcog.com
Contact Person:	Daniel Wyatt
E-mail:	dwyatt@lrcog.com
Phone:	334-528-9214 / 334-549-5223
Birmingham MPO	
Executive Director:	Charles Ball
E-mail:	cball@rpcgb.org
Contact Person:	Scott Tillman
E-mail:	stillman@rpcgb.org
Phone:	205-264-8420 / 205-264-8441
Calhoun Area MPO	
Executive Director:	Lori Corley
E-mail:	lori.corley@earpdc.org
Contact Person:	Elizabeth (Libby) Messick
E-mail:	elizabeth.messick@earpdc.org
Phone:	256-237-6741
Columbus-Phenix City MPO	
Director of Planning:	Rick Jones
E-mail:	rjones@columbusga.org
Contact Person:	Lynda Temples
E-mail:	ltemples@columbusga.org
Phone:	706-653-4421
Decatur MPO	
Director of Transp. Planning:	Dewayne Hellums
E-mail:	dhellums@decatur-al.gov
Contact Person:	Lee Terry
E-mail:	jlterry@decatur-al.gov
Phone:	256-341-4716
Eastern Shore MPO	
MPO Coordinator:	Sarah Hart Sislak
E-mail:	shart@baldwincountyal.gov
Contact Person:	Sarah Hart Sislak
E-mail:	shart@baldwincountyal.gov
Phone:	251-990-4640

Florida-Alabama TPO	
Executive Director:	Austin Mount
E-mail:	austin.mount@wfrpc.org
Contact Person:	Mary Beth Washnock
E-mail:	marybeth.washnock@wfrpc.org
Phone:	850-332-7976 / 800-226-8914
Gadsden-Etowah MPO	
Director of Planning:	Steve Partridge
E-mail:	spartridgel@cityofgadsden.com
Contact Person:	Steve Partridge
E-mail:	spartridge@cityofgadsden.com
Phone:	256-549-4520 / 256-549-4519
Huntsville Area MPO	
MPO Coordinator:	Dennis Madsen
E-mail:	dennis.madsen@huntsvilleal.gov
Contact Person:	Shontrill Lowe
E-mail:	shontrill.lowe@huntsvilleal.gov
Phone:	256-427-5100 / 256-427-5117
Mobile MPO	
Executive Director:	John F. (Rickey) Rhodes
E-mail:	rrhodes@sarpc.org
Contact Person:	Kevin Harrison
E-mail:	kharrison@sarpc.org
Phone:	251-433-6541 / 251-706-4667
Montgomery MPO	
Director of Planning:	Robert Smith
E-mail:	rsmith@montgomeryal.gov
Contact Person:	Kindell Anderson
E-mail:	kanderson@montgomeryal.gov
Phone:	334-241-2712 / 334-241-2249
Shoals Area MPO	
Director:	Keith Jones
E-mail:	kjones@nwscc.edu
Contact Person:	Joseph Holt
E-mail:	jholt@nacolg.org
Phone:	256-389-0513

Southeast Wiregrass Area MPO		Tuscaloosa Area MPO	
Director of Planning & Dev.:	Todd McDonald	Executive Director:	Dennis Stripling
E-mail:	tmcdonald@dothan.org	E-mail:	dennis.stripling@westal.org
Contact Person:	Reginald Franklin	Contact Person:	Zane Davis
E-mail:	rbfranklin@dothan.org	E-mail:	zane.davis@westal.org
Phone:	334-615-4414	Phone:	205-333-2290, ext. 227

Regional/Rural Planning Commissions/Organizations (RPCs/RPOs)

Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission		North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments	
Executive Director:	John Clyde Riggs	Executive Director:	Robby Cantrell
E-mail:	jcriggs50@gmail.com	E-mail:	robby.cantrell@adss.alabama.gov
Contact Person:	Bain Henderson	Contact Person:	Daniel Yurcaba
E-mail:	bain.henderson@atrc.net	E-mail:	daniel.yurcaba@adss.alabama.gov
Phone:	334-682-4234	Phone:	256-355-4515
Central Alabama Reg. Planning & Dev. Commission		**Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments**	
Executive Director:	Greg Clark	Executive Director:	Keith Jones
E-mail:	gclark@carpdc.com	E-mail:	kjones@nacolg.org
Contact Person:	Marshall Anderson	Contact Person:	Joseph Holt
E-mail:	manderson@carpdc.com	E-mail:	jholt@nacolg.org
Phone:	334-262-4300	Phone:	256-389-0513
East Alabama Reg. Planning & Dev. Commission		**Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham**	
Executive Director:	Lori Corley	Executive Director:	Charles Ball
E-mail:	lori.corley@earpdc.org	E-mail:	cball@rpcgb.org
Contact Person:	Lattisha Royal	Contact Person:	Scott Tillman
E-mail:	lattisha.royal@earpdc.org	E-mail:	stillman@rpcgb.org
Phone:	256-237-6741	Phone:	205-264-8420 / 205-264-8441
Lee-Russell Council of Governments		**South Alabama Regional Planning Commission**	
Executive Director:	Lisa Sandt	Executive Director:	John F. (Rickey) Rhodes
E-mail:	lsandt@lrcog.com	E-mail:	rrhodes@sarpc.org
Contact Person:	Daniel Wyatt	Contact Person:	Tom Piper
E-mail:	dwyatt@lrcog.com	E-mail:	tpiper@sarpc.org
Phone:	334-749-5264	Phone:	251-706-4676
South Central Alabama Development Commission		**Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments**	
Executive Director:	Tyson Howard	Executive Director:	Michelle Jordan
E-mail:	tyson.howard@adss.alabama.gov	E-mail:	michelle.jordan@tarcog.us
Contact Person:	Tracy Delaney	Contact Person:	Sara James

E-mail:	dcs@roadrunner.com	E-mail:	sara.james@tarcog.us
Phone:	334-244-6903 / 334-590-0655	Phone:	256-830-0818 / 256-716-2485
Southeast Alabama Reg. Planning & Dev. Commission		**West Alabama Regional Commission**	
Executive Director:	Scott Farmer	Executive Director:	Dennis Stripling
E-mail:	sfarmer@searpdc.org	E-mail:	dennis.stripling@westal.org
Contact Person:	Andrew Windham	Contact Person:	Zane Davis
E-mail:	awindham@searpdc.org	E-mail:	zane.davis@westal.org
Phone:	334-794-4093, ext. 1409	Phone:	205-333-2290, ext. 227

APPENDIX I

NON-METROPOLITAN LOCAL OFFICIALS COOPERATIVE PROCESS DIRECTIVE

GUIDELINES FOR OPERATION

SUBJECT: STATEWIDE PLANNING CONSULTATION PROCESS

In accordance with 23 CFR 450 as amended and applicable Federal Highway Administration/ Federal Transit Administration (FHWA/FTA) planning guidelines, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) adopts the following to provide for cooperative planning with Non-Metropolitan local officials and consulting planning with the Tribal Governments and the Department of Interior in the Alabama Statewide Transportation Planning Process (ASTPP), including the initial development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (LRSTP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):

1. Prior to the periodic development, review, and/or revisions to the LRSTP and STIP, ALDOT's Bureau of Office Engineer (BOE) will provide notification of the proposed action and request comments/suggestions.
    a. The notification process to Non-Metropolitan local officials will consist of, at a minimum, that the BOE will provide information regarding the proposed action to the Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs). The RPOs will then distribute the information to their members and coordinate responses for submission to ALDOT. In addition, ALDOT will provide notification to the following organizations: Association of County Commissioners/Engineers of Alabama, Alabama League of Municipalities, and the Alabama Association of Regional Council. These agencies will be requested to advise their membership of the proposed action, coordinate their constituents' response, and return to ALDOT within the requested time period.
    b. The notification process to Tribal Governments will consist of, at a minimum, that the BOE will provide information regarding the proposed action to the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission. This agency will be asked to coordinate their constituents' response and return to ALDOT within the requested time period. In addition, ALDOT will provide notification to all Native American Tribes recognized by the State.
    c. The notification process to the Department of Interior will consist of, at a minimum, that the BOE will provide information regarding the proposed action to this agency for their participation in LRSTP/STIP updates.
2. ALDOT will review and consider the comments/suggestions received **before** developing the draft LRSTP/STIP and commencing with the public involvement process.

3. After the adoption of the LRSTP and STIP, ALDOT will advise those agencies listed in the above item #1 of the comments received and the resultant actions. For any proposed modification not adopted, ALDOT will provide its reasoning.

4. ALDOT will, as required by 23 CFR 450 or applicable FHWA/FTA planning regulations, solicit comments regarding the effectiveness of this cooperative process for notification to Non-Metropolitan local officials.

RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL: _____
BUREAU CHIEF

APPROVAL: _____
CHIEF ENGINEER

APPROVAL: _____ May 7, 2021
TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR DATE

This Public Involvement Plan update was prepared for the Alabama Department of Transportation by Michael Baker International and Shumer Consulting.