

2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Florida-Alabama
TPO 
Transportation Planning Organization

Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization
staffed by the Emerald Coast Regional Council

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This document is posted online at www.ecrc.org.

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This report was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), and local governments, in fulfillment of requirements set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR 450.316) and the Florida MPO Handbook. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the U.S. Department of Transportation)

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Why is Public Involvement Important?

One of the elements of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is public involvement. The more citizens involved in the plan, the better the plan will be for the improvement of the community. Documented public involvement opportunities result in fewer challenges to overcome in later phases of the plan. Many issues can be identified and rectified during the planning process. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) outlines the development of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Long Range Transportation Plan

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a federally required document, updated every five years, that addresses future transportation needs for a minimum of twenty years.

Public involvement strategies for each LRTP update should include a variety of outreach activities designed to solicit feedback in all stages of the planning process from stakeholders of all ages, communities, and interests. Additionally, all outreach activities must subscribe to the following procedures, strategies and desired outcomes, taken from the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR 450.316) and the MPO Handbook. These strategies are as listed:

- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the LRTP on the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)/Emerald Coast Regional Council website and offices;
- Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decisions, such as but not limited to the approval of the LRTP;
- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during plan development process;
- Employ visualization techniques to describe the LRTP;
- Hold public meetings at convenient times and accessible locations;
- Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to, low-income and minority households;
- Coordinate with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under 23 C.F.R. Subpart B;
- Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan;

- When significant written and oral comments are received on a draft LRTP, including the financial plan, as a result of public involvement, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final LRTP; and
- If the final LRTP differs significantly from the one made available for public comment or raises new material issues, an additional opportunity for public comment must be made available.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders will include identified neighborhood associations, affordable housing organizations, community organizations, federally-designated and non-federally recognized Native American Tribes, Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA), and major employers in the TPO area. Contact lists will be developed with stakeholder emails and phone numbers. Entities included in the contact lists will be contacted to promote participation in the LRTP process and to provide presentations. These contact lists will also be used to help develop a steering committee that will help in reviewing the kick-off meeting, Goals and Objectives, Needs Plan, and Cost Feasible Plan.

Citizens Advisory Committee

The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) is comprised of members of the public who express an interest in transportation planning. CAC members are appointed by members of the TPO board. Citizens may get more information by emailing publicinvolvement@ecrc.org.

Technical Coordinating Committee

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) is made up of local government staff. This committee participates in the planning process by providing technical advice to the TPO on all transportation issues.

Transportation Planning Organization Board

The Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Board is made up of local elected officials. This board is the ultimate decision-making body on regional transportation concerns in the City of Pensacola, City of Milton, City of Gulf Breeze, Escambia, and Santa Rosa counties in Florida, as well as the City of Orange Beach and the Community of Lillian in Baldwin County, Alabama.

Other TPO Committees

Presentations will be made to other TPO committees and groups as needed.

Long Range Transportation Plan Study Area

The Florida-Alabama Study Area encompasses Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in Florida, as well as the City of Orange Beach and the Community of Lillian in Baldwin County, Alabama. To ensure that staff is reaching appropriate communities and appropriate coordination with agencies and stakeholders in the region, the Florida-Alabama TPO Community Profile, developed in the Florida-Alabama TPO Title VI Plan, will be updated during the information phase of the Long Range Transportation Plan process.

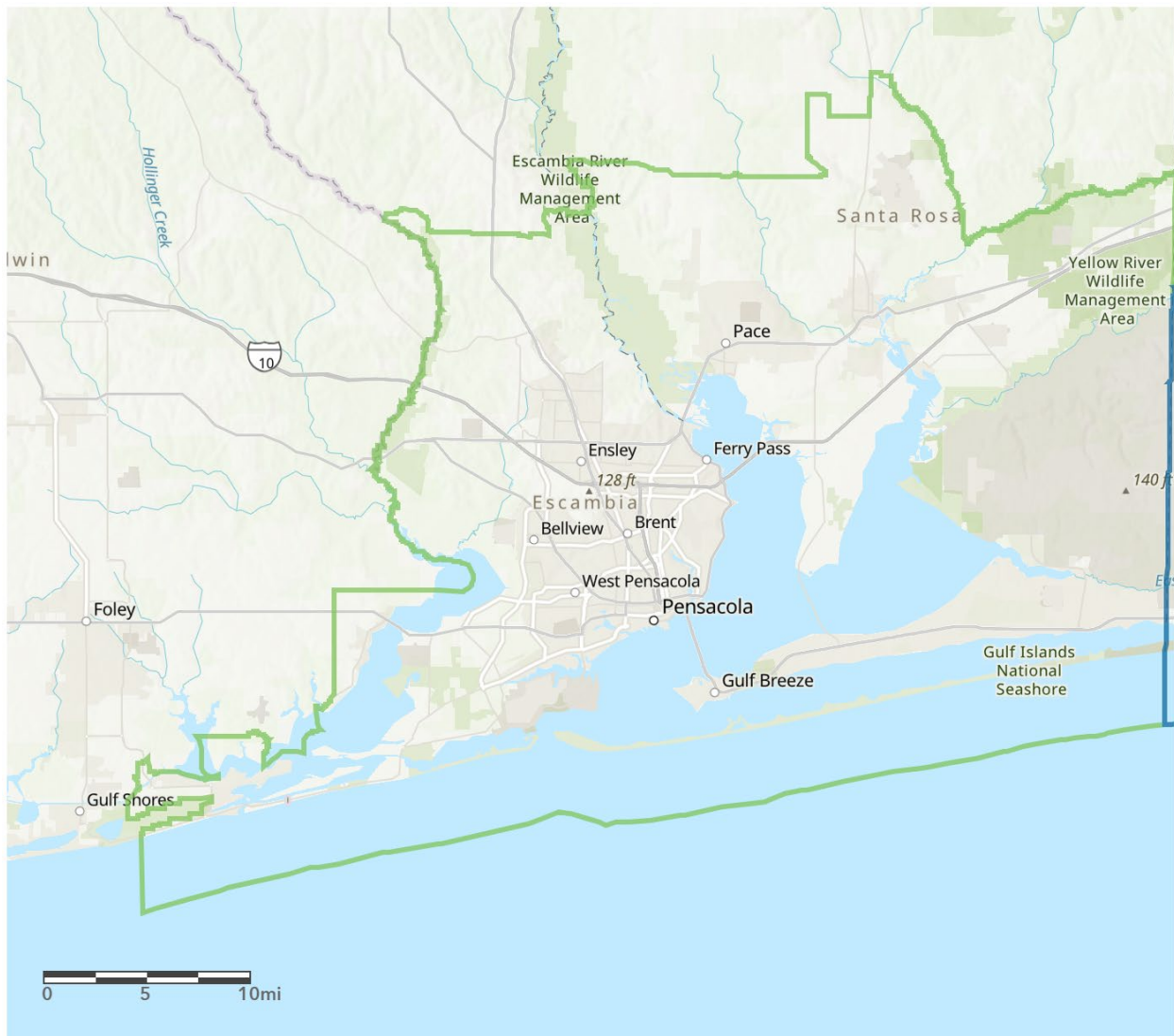


Figure 1: Map illustrating boundaries of the Florida-Alabama TPO

Public Participation Goals

The four goals pertaining to the public participation and outreach process for the Florida-Alabama 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, originally identified in the Florida-Alabama Public Participation Plan (PPP), are listed below:

Goal 1: Early and Consistent Involvement

Involve the public and stakeholder agencies early in the project by engaging them during each of the key phases of involvement:

- Information Phase – Inform the public and stakeholder agencies of the plan’s purpose, timeline, major milestones, and how they can get involved and stay informed during the process
- Decision-making Phase – Identify specific opportunities for the public and stakeholder agencies to provide input at key decision-making points that will affect the development of the plan
- Review Phase – Allow the public to review and provide input on a draft version of the completed product

Goal 2: Opportunity

Provide citizens and stakeholder agencies the opportunity to participate in all phases of the public involvement process, with a focus on ensuring that traditionally under-represented or under-served populations are engaged.

Goal 3: Information and Communication

Provide citizens and stakeholder agencies clear, timely, and accurate information relating to the plan as it progresses.

Goal 4: Range of Techniques

Use a broad spectrum of techniques for a diverse population within the project area. To ensure the above goals are met, a wide range of public involvement and outreach techniques will be proposed for use during the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan update.



Traditionally Under-Represented and Under-Served Populations

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal funds. In addition to considering minority and low-income persons as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 12898 - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice (EJ) in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, the TPO identifies and addresses, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations within the Florida-Alabama TPO Study Area. The Project Team for the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan will integrate the Title VI and EJ planning process being developed and implemented as part of an ongoing project. This effort will be used to advance racial equity and support for underserved and disadvantaged communities along with identifying EJ areas for consideration in the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. Within the county, ZIP codes with higher concentrations of minority, transit-dependent, low-income, older adult, and non-English speaking populations will be identified as EJ areas.

Throughout the project, participants in public outreach activities will be asked to provide their residential ZIP codes. Participation from these ZIP codes will be analyzed periodically by the Project Team to determine participation levels in the EJ areas compared to the study area as a whole, to determine if outreach activities have been effective in reaching individuals living in these areas. If participation from persons in the EJ areas appear to be disproportionately low, the Project Team will implement a process to improve participation. For example, if there is significantly less participation in a transit-dependent EJ area, smaller community meetings or outreach events within that immediate area may be held so participants will not have to travel as far to be involved. The Project Team will work with counties and municipalities to identify meeting locations that will assist in improving participation in general from certain priority groups.



Public Participation and Outreach Strategies

General methods proven effective in previous outreach efforts by the TPO include:

- Reviewing previous assessments and LRTP activities for successful and unsuccessful public outreach endeavors
- Reviewing Community Profiles to understand the diversity of the TPO Study Area and to identify traditionally underserved populations to help guide the TPO's outreach
- Develop a list of specific public involvement and outreach tasks to include in the draft scope of services

Strategies used by the TPO may include but are not limited to:

Outreach

- Identification of stakeholders, organizations, traditionally underserved communities, tribal organizations, and media outlets
- Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) Tools
- News releases
- Radio/TV interviews
- Public Notices
- Creation and distribution of surveys
- Public open houses, workshops, forums, and focus groups
- Presentations to civic and community groups
- Comment cards
- Use of GIS maps and other technology tools
- Development and staffing of a steering committee

Awareness/Education

- Email notifications to stakeholders, organizations, traditionally underserved communities, tribal organizations, and media outlets
- Social Media posts, events, and/or Virtual Open Houses
- Dedicated section on the TPO website

Documentation

- Compilation of survey information and comments
- GIS mapping of outreach locations
- Photos from outreach events
- Open/click rates for email blasts
- Engagement with social media posts
- Oral and written comments to be posted to the website along with drafts

Public Meetings

1. Legal line public notice printed in the newspaper of largest circulation within the TPO Study Area* within a reasonable timeframe prior to public meetings
2. Social media event and/or post
3. News release/reminder release*
4. Event on website calendar
5. Email to TPO/TCC/CAC members, interested parties, and city and county partners

** Includes: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations to access meeting, and for limited English proficiency, are available upon request. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services should contact Public Involvement toll-free 800-226-8914, ext. 220 or 800-995-8771 for TTY-Florida, at least 48 hours in advance. Comuníquese con Leandra Meredith, de los requisitos de acceso el idioma en el 850-332-7976, ext. 227 o 800-995-8771 para TTY-Florida al menos 48 horas de antelación.*

Participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who believe they have been discriminated against on these conditions may file a complaint with the Title VI Coordinator, Leandra Meredith, by phone at 850-332-7976, or email at leandra.meredith@ecrc.org.

Public Workshops

Follow the same steps as public meetings (above) and may also include:

1. Email flyers to committees, interested parties, public transit providers, and community facilities
2. Posting of events on online community event calendars, including but not limited to libraries and community centers
3. Tailored presentation as needed

Presentations to Groups and Organizations

1. Tailored presentation materials as needed
2. Follow-up note of thanks and a summary of questions and comments to the meeting coordinator

Staff will assess outreach activities to evaluate their effectiveness and make improvements as needed.

Public Participation Schedule

To implement the most effective strategies, public involvement staff will provide a schedule of Public Participation strategies with the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan Scope of Work. This schedule will complement the overall LRTP update process and address specific public outreach strategies for the kick-off meeting, Goals and Objectives, Needs Plan, and Cost Feasible Plan.

Schedule can be found online at www.ecrc.org/FLAL2050LRTP

Assessment of Public Participation Strategies

The Florida-Alabama TPO must assess the effectiveness of its public participation strategies to evaluate their effectiveness and make improvements as needed to ensure that funds and time invested in public participation activities are achieving their goals. It is standard practice for all projects and initiatives initiated by the TPO to require an evaluation of public outreach activities on a quarterly basis. If the assessment reveals that the public participation goals are not being achieved, the techniques may be modified or changed.

The Florida-Alabama TPO's public participation activities can be evaluated through numerous possible methods. Currently the TPO is measuring effectiveness by tracking the following:

- Number and quality of outreach opportunities
- Number of social media posts and post reach
- Number of eblasts
- Number of news release subscribers (media as well as groups and organizations) and number of news releases distributed
- Number of attendees at public workshops and comments received
- Number of completed surveys

Resolution (Placeholder)

RESOLUTION FL-AL 24-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA-ALABAMA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADOPTING THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION 2050 PLAN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

WHEREAS, the Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is the organization designated by the governors of Florida and Alabama as being responsible, together with the states of Florida and Alabama, for carrying out the continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Florida-Alabama TPO planning area; and

WHEREAS, 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 450, Subpart C, Section 316 (e) states the metropolitan planning process shall, "develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies;" and

WHEREAS, in general, federal legislation built upon previous transportation legislation to provide states and metropolitan planning organizations specific direction in conducting and promoting broad-based public participation activities; and

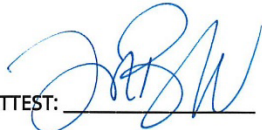
WHEREAS, federal legislation requires metropolitan planning organizations to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan;

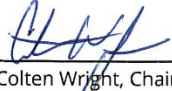
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FLORIDA-ALABAMA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION THAT:

- 1) The TPO has reviewed its public involvement procedures, hereafter referred to as the Public Involvement Plan, to ensure that full and open access to the LRTP planning and TPO decision-making process is provided for all citizens and finds the document to comply with the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR 450.316) and the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Handbook.
- 2) The TPO adopts the Long Range Transportation 2050 Public Involvement Plan.

Passed and duly adopted by the Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization on this 10th day of April 2024.

FLORIDA- ALABAMA TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING ORGANIZATION

ATTEST: 

BY: 
Colten Wright, Chairman