

PARTICIPATION PLAN

17 OCT 2023

We Invite You to Join Us in Shaping
the Future of Mobility for the
Columbus-Phenix City Metro Region.

2023-2026

COLUMBUS-PHENIX CITY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

420 10th Street Columbus, GA 31901

**RESOLUTION
COLUMBUS-PHENIX CITY TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE**

2023-2026 PARTICIPATION PLAN (PP)

WHEREAS the Columbus-Phenix City Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has been designated by the Governors of the States of Alabama and Georgia as the recipient of Columbus-Phenix City Urbanized Area (UZA) and Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) funds, and who is responsible, together with the States of Alabama and Georgia, for implementing the applicable provisions of 23 USC 134 and 135 (amended by the FAST Act, Sections 1201 and 1202, December 2015); 42 USC 2000d- 1, 7401; 23 CFR 450 and 500; 40 CFR Parts 51, and 93; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Department of Transportation requires all urbanized areas, as established by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, doing area-wide urban transportation planning, to submit a Participation Plan (PP) as a condition for meeting the provisions by Title 23 USC 134; and

WHEREAS the PP is consistent with the goals, and objectives of the MPO, and reflects changes in program emphasis and funding availability outlined in 23 USC 134 and 23 CFR 450.316; and


WHEREAS the MPO developed the PP in consultation with interested parties outlined in 23 CFR 450.3 16 including individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled; and

WHEREAS the MPO provided a 45-day comment period from TBD; and

WHEREAS the Columbus Department of Planning, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the Alabama Department of Transportation have reviewed the activities of the planning process and found them to be in conformance with the requirements of the laws and regulations; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Columbus-Phenix City Transportation Study (C-PCTS) Policy Committee endorses the 2023-2026 PP; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the C-PCTS Policy Committee finds that the requirements of Title 23 USC 134 and 23 CFR 450 regarding metropolitan transportation planning have been met and authorizes its chairman to execute a joint certification of this fact with the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration, and the Federal Highway Administration



Mayor B.H. "Skip" Henderson, III Chair, Policy
Coordinating Committee

Date 10/18/23



Will Johnson, MPO/Planning Director
Attest

COLUMBUS-PHENIX CITY
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

PARTICIPATION PLAN 2023-2026

View this document at <http://www.columbusga.org/Planning>

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Adopted 17 Oct 2023

The Public Participation Plan was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and local participating governments, in partial fulfillment of requirements in Title 23 USC 134 and 135, amended by the FAST Act, Sections 1201 and 1202, December 2015. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Columbus-Phenix City MPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), which states that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” In addition to Title VI, there are other Nondiscrimination statutes that afford legal protection. These statutes include the following: Section 162 (a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 USC 324) (sex), Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability).

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ABOUT THE MPO

What is the Columbus-Phenix City MPO?

The Columbus-Phenix City Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is your region's public decision-making policy board for prioritizing spending of federal, state, and local multimodal transportation dollars. MPOs make transportation investment decisions for the metro area using a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive approach. CPCMPO is hosted by the Columbus Consolidated Government's Planning Department.

What does the MPO do?

The core functions of the MPO are to—

- 1) Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision making.
- 2) Use data and planning methods to identify and evaluate transportation improvement options.
- 3) Develop long- and short- range plans, programs, and studies to address the region's multimodal needs.
- 4) Involve the public in all stages of transportation planning and programming.

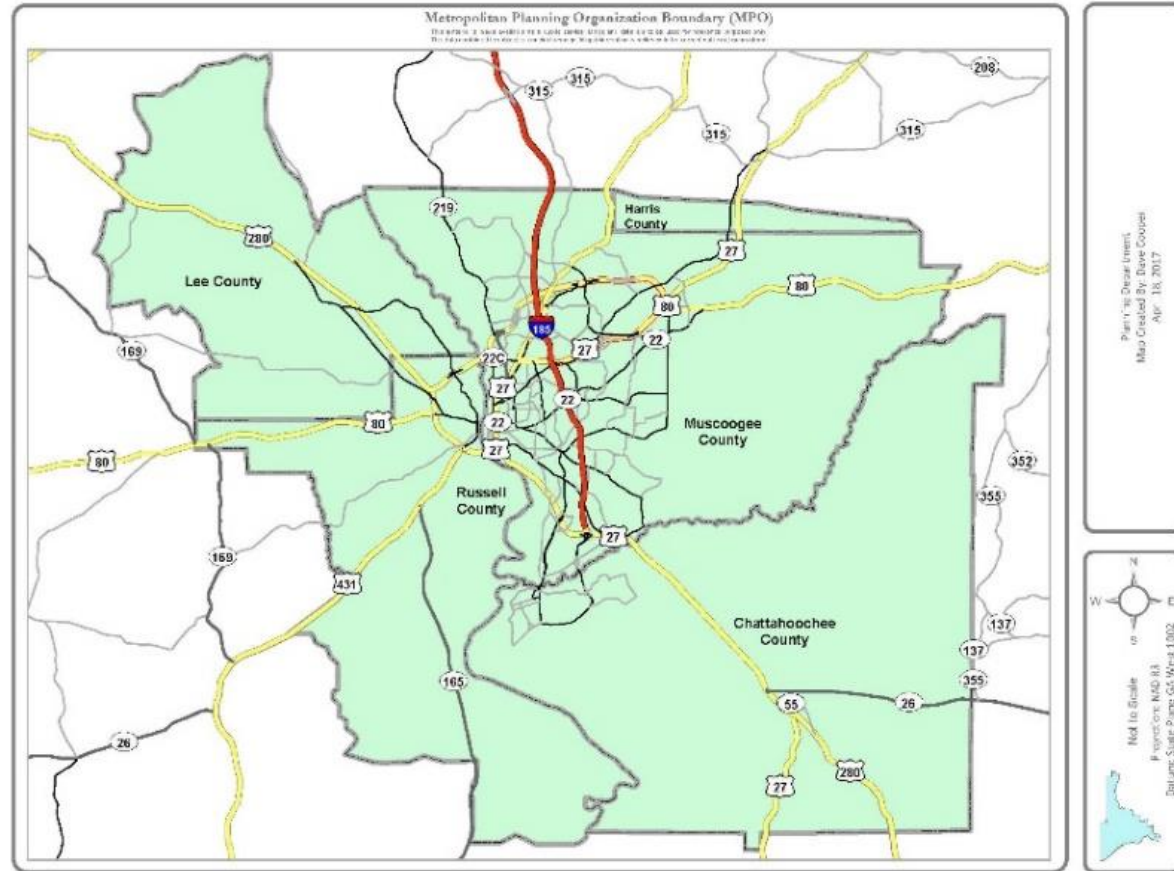


¹ Image from the US Department of Transportation 2016 *Every Place Counts Leadership Academy Transportation Toolkit*. Chattahoochee River kayaker, Metro, and PEX added by CPCMPO staff.

Did You Know...?

The Columbus-Phenix City MPO, one of the first in the nation, was established in 1964². The map³ below shows the planning area and includes—

- ✓ 734 square miles
- ✓ 280,000+ people
(about 380 persons per square mile)
- ✓ 2 State
Departments of
Transportation
- ✓ 5 Counties
- ✓ 3 Cities
- ✓ 2 Transit Providers
- ✓ 1 airport
- ✓ 1 military
installation
- ✓ 6 staff members



² For a complete listing of MPOs across the country, visit <https://www.planning.dot.gov/mpo.asp>.

³ Per request received during public comment period, map was enlarged from the draft version.

Transportation Planning Process

The transportation system includes everything from roadways, stormwater infrastructure, and transit to rail, air, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. How the system performs influences many aspects of everyday life like employment, housing, air quality, social equity, safety, sense of place, and environmental conservation. As you can see from Figures 1 and 2, transportation planning connects investments to broader national and regional goals. MPOs are required to use a performance-based process to show how investments lead to desired community outcomes.

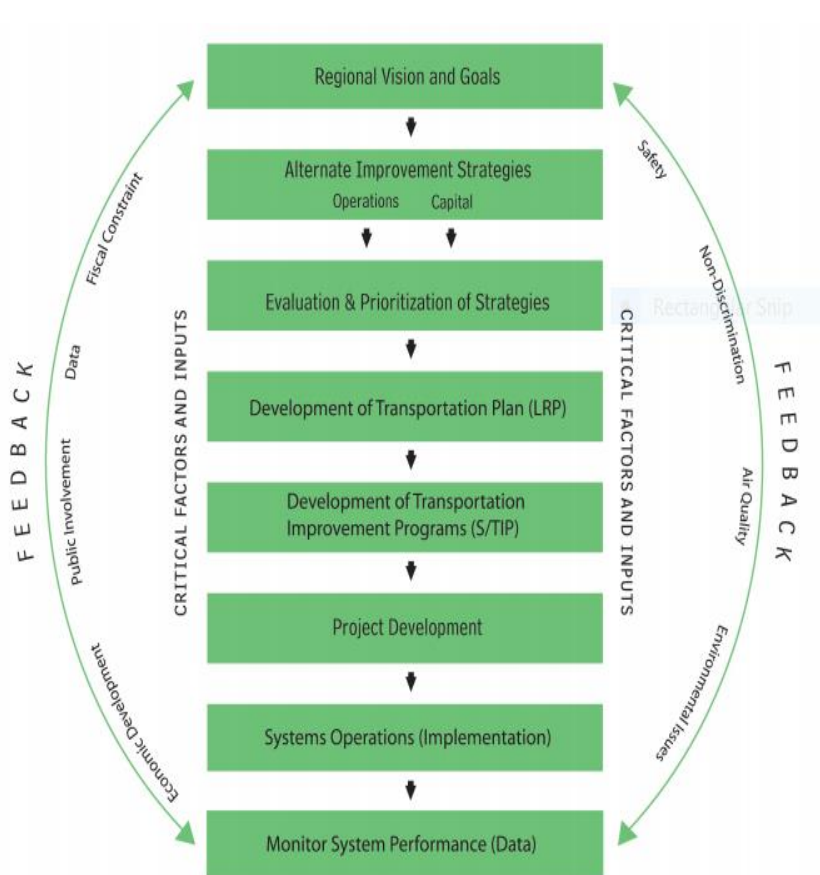


Figure 1. Transportation Planning Process. CPCMPO develops a long-range plan called the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

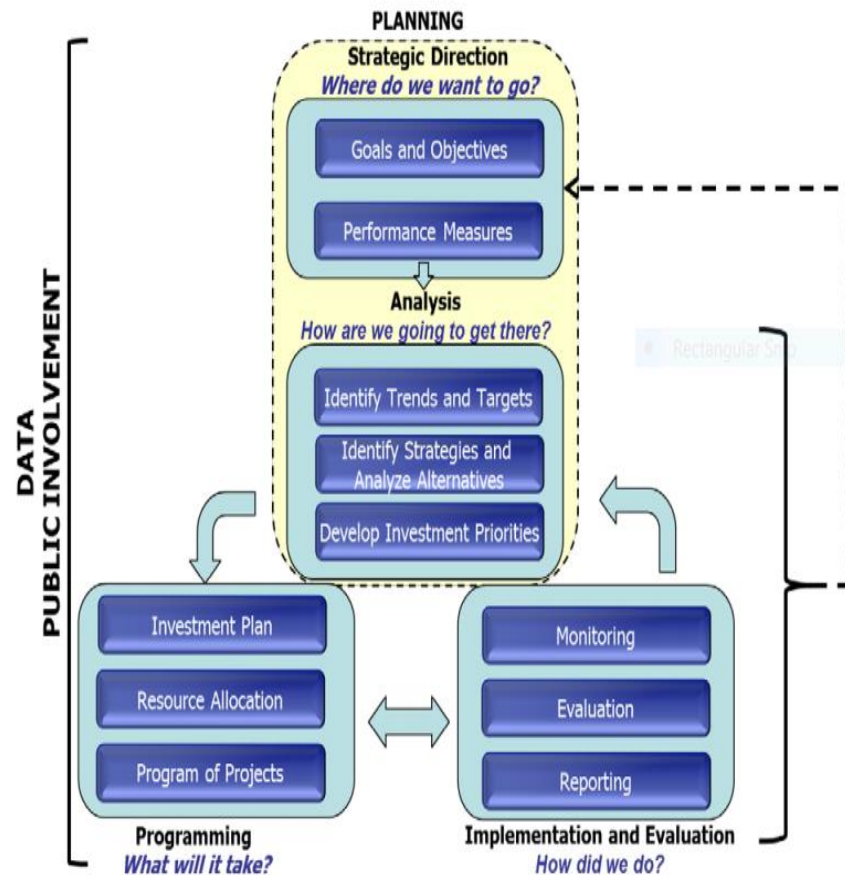


Figure 2. Framework for Performance-Based Planning and Programming. Performance measures indicate how well the transportation system meets agency and public goals and expectations.

Planning Emphasis Area's

The Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration has encouraged the inclusion of the three Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) in the UPWP as these are considered U.S. DOT Secretarial priorities and avenues for continuous improvement for Metropolitan Transportation Planning.

With continued focus on transportation planning the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Offices of Planning have jointly issued updated Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) to include eight new PEAs.

The Columbus-Phenix City MPO is making it a priority to focus on connectivity and the need for a truly multimodal system. The MPO Staff is working with local groups on new multi-use trails that are being constructed in Columbus.

The performance measures align with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) goal areas and evaluate projects by purpose and scale. The Columbus-Phenix City MPO is currently establishing additional performance targets and will work with ALDOT, GDOT and FHWA (Georgia & Alabama).

1. Performance Based Planning and Programming: The development and implementation of a performance management approach to transportation planning and programming that supports the achievement of the performance outcomes of the transportation system.

Performance measures and indicators will be developed and tracked as the plans are updated.

- Since January 2018, the Columbus-Phenix City Transportation Study (C-PCTS) MPO Policy Committee adopted the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) Safety Performance Management Targets. *On January 17, 2023, the MPO Policy Committee will adopt GDOT's Safety Performance Measurement Targets for 2023. The Safety Targets are adopted on a yearly basis.*
- *On March 21, 2023, the MPO Policy Committee adopted GDOT's and ALDOT's Bridge and Pavement Targets.*
- *Since March 2023, the MPO Policy Committee adopted GDOT's and ALDOT's Travel Time Performance Targets.*

a. Land Use and Preservation:

- The City of Columbus adopted the complete streets criteria. MPO staff will collaborate with the city to ensure compliance.
- Acres of agricultural land or vacant property converted to another use. *There was one rezoning case with 21.75 acres of agricultural land and vacant property converted to another use.*

- MPO staff is currently tracking the number of converted properties that negatively affect the transportation network. *Staff has completed twenty-seven (27) traffic analyses for the rezoning cases with one (1) case that will affect the transportation network.*
 - A number of vacant or blighted buildings demolished due to MPO projects. MPO staff is currently tracking the number of demolishing due to MPO or City projects.
- b. Pedestrian and Bicycle System:
- Number of pedestrian/bicycle improvement projects completed (safe street crossings, pedestrian signals). *The City of Columbus completed a multiuse trail along Martin L. King, Jr. Boulevard and along 10th Street in FY 2021.*
 - Linkages to existing or planned public transit nodes. Number of projects that incorporate existing bus stops as a component of the design. *The MPO will incorporate bus stops into all transportation improvement projects during the design phase.*
 - Miles of on street bike lanes created (tracked by GIS Division for the City of Columbus). *Currently the City of Columbus has a little over six (6) miles of street bike lanes.*
 - Miles of sidewalks created (currently tracked by GIS Division)
 - Percentage of workers commuting by bike (Data Source: American Community Survey).
 - Percentage of workers commuting by walking (Data Source: American Community Survey).
- c. Road Safety: *MPO Staff will utilize GEARS on determining where to improve and / or add road / pedestrian / bicycle facilities.*
- Traffic crash data to include number of injuries and fatalities.
 - Intersection improvements based on crash data.
 - Number of bike fatalities per year.
 - Number of pedestrian fatalities per year.

Data to be collected from Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System (GEARS) and the Critical Analysis Reporting Environment (CARE).

2. Models of Regional Planning Cooperation: Promote cooperation and coordination across MPO Boundaries and across State boundaries where appropriate to ensure a regional approach to transportation planning.
 - Define which seats/members cooperating agencies and subcommittees must fill. The subcommittees must constitute representatives within the MPO boundaries and shall be key stakeholders from each region.

- To ensure regional access, MPO committee meetings to be conducted at different locations within the MPO.
 - Identify funds for the Environmental Impact Study for the High-Speed Rail Project.
3. Access to Essential Services/Ladders of Opportunity: Access to essential services in which the transportation planning process identifies transportation connectivity gaps and solutions to address those gaps.
- Sidewalks / Multi-Use Paths
 - Identify funds and locations to construct sidewalks that will connect neighborhoods and public places. Staff is working with local community groups on new sidewalks / multiuse paths. Staff amended the 2045 MTP and the 2021-2024 TIP to include a TAP Project for the City of Columbus – Construct a 10’ multiuse trail along Cherokee Avenue on September 21, 2021.
 - Implement projects identified in the Alternative Transportation Plan.

December 15, 2021 – FHWA advised MPO’s that there are eight (8) new PEA’s (see 4-11 below). The MTP Development will focus on “equity, resiliency, climate change, complete streets, and freight”. C-PCTS will amend / update documents once more guidance is received from FHWA.

4. Tackling the Climate Crisis – Transition to a Clean Energy, Resilient Future: To ensure that our transportation plans and infrastructure investments help achieve the national greenhouse gas reduction goals of 50-52 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, and net-zero emissions by 2050, and increase resilience to extreme weather events and other disasters resulting from the increasing effects of climate change.
5. Equity and Justice in Transportation Planning: Ensure that public involvement in the planning process and that plans, and strategies reflect various perspectives, concerns, and priorities from impacted areas. Encourage the use of strategies that:
- Improve infrastructure for non-motorized travel, public transportation access, and increased public transportation service in underserved communities.
 - Plan for the safety of all road users, particularly those on arterials, through infrastructure improvements and advanced speed management.
 - Reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel and associated air pollution in communities near high-volume corridors.
 - Offer reduced public transportation fares as appropriate
 - Target demand-response service towards communities with higher concentrations of older adults and those with poor access to essential services
 - Consider equitable and sustainable practices while developing transit-oriented development including affordable housing strategies and consideration of environmental justice populations.

6. Complete Streets: FHWA and FTA assist Federal aid recipients to plan, develop, and operate streets and networks that prioritize safety, comfort, and access to destinations for people who use the street network, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, micro-mobility users, freight delivery services, and motorists. The goal is to provide an equitable and safe transportation network for travelers for all ages and abilities, including those from marginalized communities facing historic disinvestment.
 - *The City of Columbus and the Columbus-Phenix City MPO implemented a Complete Streets Policy in 2018.*
7. Public Involvement: Early, effective, and continuous public involvement brings diverse viewpoints into the decision-making process. FHWA Division and FTA regional offices encourage MPOs, State DOTs, and providers of public transportation to increase meaningful public involvement in transportation planning by integrating Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) tools into the overall public involvement approach while ensuring continued public participation by individuals without access to computers and mobile devices.
8. Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) / U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Coordination: FHWA Division and FTA Regional offices encourage MPOs and State DOTs to coordinate with representatives from DOD in the transportation planning and project programming process on infrastructure and connectivity needs for STRAHNET routes and other public roads that connect to DOD facilities.
 - *A representative from Fort Benning, Georgia is an advisory member on the PCC and a voting member on the TCC.*
9. Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) Coordination: FHWA Division and FTA regional offices encourage MPOs and State DOTs to coordinate with FLMAs in the transportation planning and project programming process on infrastructure and connectivity needs related to access routes and other public roads and transportation services that connect to Federal lands.
10. Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL): FHWA Division and FTA regional offices encourage State DOTs, MPOs, and Public Transportation Agencies to implement PEL as part of the transportation planning and environmental review processes. The use of PEL is a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process, and uses the information, analysis, and products developed during planning to inform the environmental review process.
11. Data in Transportation Planning: FHWA Division and FTA regional offices should encourage State DOTs, MPOs, and providers of public transportation to incorporate data sharing and consideration into the transportation planning process, because data assets have value across multiple programs.

CPCMPO Planning Activities

The Columbus-Phenix City Metropolitan Planning Organization is responsible for updating and monitoring the following planning activities and products. Click on the title to view the latest version of the document.

Planning Activity	Description
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Formerly called the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	Long range plan with a 20-year planning horizon. Uses performance measures and targets. Policies and actions lead to a regional and multimodal transportation network. Mobility and access for people and goods. Promotes the preservation and efficient performance of existing system; good quality of life. Fiscally constrained guide for project selection. Updated every 5 years and amended as needed. Requires a 30-day public comment period. This includes all amendments also.
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Based on the MTP. Short range program with a 4-year timeframe. Capital and non-capital surface transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and transit. The financial plan is detailed. Agency responsible for implementation is listed. Describes how projects will work towards achieving performance measures. Updated every 4 years and amended as needed. Requires a 30-day public comment period. This includes all amendments also.
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	Detailed list of urban transportation planning studies and tasks during the fiscal year. Guides staff work for the MPO. Identifies funding, personnel, and timeline for planning. Updated every fiscal year ⁴ . Requires a 30-day public comment period. This includes all amendments also.
Participation Plan (PP)	Action plan for engaging the public including traditionally underserved communities. All planning activities must be done in collaboration with the public. Evaluated yearly and updated as needed. Requires a 45-day public comment period. This includes all amendments also.
Congestion Management Plan (CMP)	Required for Transportation Management Areas (TMA) with population > 200,000. Strategies for reducing congestion and increasing mobility. Requires a 30-day public comment period. Updated as needed.
Special Studies	Used to study investment options. Studies can focus on corridors, a specific mode, or policy issue.

⁴ The fiscal year is 1 July to 30 June.

Committee Structure

Policy Committee

Meets 3rd Tuesday.

Mayor B.H. “Skip” Henderson, III, Columbus — Chair
 Mayor Eddie Lowe, Phenix City — Vice-Chair
 Charles Coffey, Chairman, Cusseta-Chattahoochee Commission
 Mayor Fred Copeland, Jr., Smiths Station
 Rod Costello, Chairman, Russell County Commission
 Bill English, Chairman, Lee County Commission
 Rosa Evans, Director of METRA, Columbus

Steve Graben, PE, Southeast Regional Engineer, Alabama DOT
 Will Johnson, Director of Planning, Columbus
 Jannine Miller, Director of Planning, Georgia DOT
 TBD, Chairman, Citizens Advisory Committee
 Lisa Sandt, Lee Russell County of Governments, PEX
 Cathy Williams, Georgia State Transportation Board

Mark D. Bartlett, PE, Division Administrator, FHWA, Alabama
 Daniel Hinton, PE, Acting Division Administrator, FHWA, Georgia
 Bradley B. Lindsey, PE, State Local Transportation Engineer — Alabama DOT
 Michael Presley, PE, District Engineer, Georgia DOT
 Brian C. Langford, Office of Planning — Georgia DOT

Technical Committee

Meets Thursday of 2nd Full Week.

Will Johnson, Director of Planning, Columbus, Chair
 Jim Adcock, Master Planner, Fort Moore
 Vance Beck, PE, Traffic Engineer, Columbus
 Kenneth Riner, Board of Commissioners, Chattahoochee County
 Shawn Blakeney, PE, Russell County Engineer
 Josh Kervin, PE, Montgomery Area Traffic Engineer, Alabama DOT
 Amber Clark, Director, Columbus Airport
 Felton Grant, Transportation Planning Coordinator, Columbus
 Justin Hardee, PE, Lee County Engineer
 Pam Hodge, Deputy City Manager, Columbus
 Andrew Swicegood, Engineer, Smiths Station

Wallace Hunter, City Manager, Phenix City
 TBD, PE, Assistant Region Engineer, Alabama DOT
 Jim Livingston, Executive Director, River Valley Regional Commission
 Angel Moore, PE, City Engineer, Phenix City
 Tiffany Grier, METRA, Columbus
 Adam Smith, PE, Pre-Construction Engineer, Georgia DOT
 Jackie Williams, Transportation Planning Specialist, Georgia DOT
 Larry Alexander, Federal Highway Administration, Alabama
 Carol Comer, Multi-modal Planning Division, Georgia DOT (non-voting)

Ann-Marie Day, Planning Team Leader, and FHWA, Georgia (non-voting)
 Michael Hara, PE, Asst. State Local Transportation Engineer, Planning, ALDOT (non-voting)
 TBD, Chairman, Citizens Advisory Committee (non-voting)
 Olivia Lewis, Federal Highway Administration, Georgia ((non-voting)
 Harland Smith, District Planning & Programming Coordinator, GDOT (non-voting)
 Nicole Spivey, FTA — Georgia
 Tim Toomy, Area Engineer, GDOT, (non-voting)

Citizens Advisory Committee

Meets 3pm Tuesday of 2nd Full Week.

**MPO Staff is restructuring the CAC
 or looking at other ways to engage
 the community.**

Committee Policies

The Policy Committee is at the top of the organization, provides policy guidelines, and approves the work of the other committees. The Technical Coordinating Committee provides technical support and guidelines. The Citizen Advisory Committee is an important link between citizens and the MPO. The Transportation Planning Division is the staff to the MPO committees. This Division collects information, analyzes it, and presents it to all the committees. Outlined below are the functions of each committee.

The **Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC)** performs the following duties for transportation planning.

1. Formulates goals and objectives for transportation planning in the Columbus-Phenix City urbanized area.
2. Provides governmental support to planning programs and assures cooperation between different offices.
3. Reviews, amends, and adopts transportation plans and programs.
4. Evaluates progress towards implementation of projects and, if needed, reschedules priorities.
5. Approves the Unified Planning Work Program.

The **Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)** is a committee of public and private sector transportation specialists. This committee deals with the technical activities necessary in the transportation planning process.

1. Collects, maintains, and analyzes data for transportation planning.
2. Prepares transportation plan and advises the Policy Committee on changes in the plan and programs.
3. Evaluates transportation system improvements and recommends changes to decision makers in the government.
4. Prepares the Unified Planning Work Program and the Transportation Improvement Program with the MPO staff.

The **Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)** is an important link for two-way communication between the citizens and the transportation professionals. This committee conveys the needs of the citizens to the planners and explains the plans and programs to the citizens. The Citizen Advisory Committee has the following responsibilities. **MPO Staff is in the process of restructuring the Citizens Advisory Committee.**

1. Reviews current year transportation improvements and recommends a Unified Planning Work Program for the next year.
2. Makes transportation recommendations to the Policy Committee and the Technical Coordinating Committee.
3. Reviews policy and procedure matters and make appropriate recommendations to the Policy Committee and the Technical Coordinating Committee.
4. Assesses public opinion through opinion polls and interviews and conveys to the Policy and the Technical Committees the needs of the public.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Why Should You Be Involved?

While state & local departments of transportation and transit agencies sponsor and implement projects, the MPO determines how funds are invested in your region. It was not always the case that the transportation system worked for everyone. Today's MPO leaders and stakeholders value the opportunity to engage with you on transportation issues that affect you and your community.

How do Transportation Decisions Affect People and Communities?

MPOs are required to consider projects and strategies that—

- Support the *economic vitality* of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the *safety* of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the *security* of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the *accessibility* and *mobility* of people and for freight.
- Protect and enhance the *environment*, promote *energy conservation*, improve the *quality of life*, and promote *consistency* between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the *integration* and *connectivity* of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote *efficient* system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the *existing transportation system*.
- Improve the *resiliency* and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.
- Enhance *travel* and *tourism*.

Civil Rights Policy Framework

Through early and continuous public engagement, MPO decisions are accountable to the public. As an agency representing federal, state, and local interests, MPOs and participating agencies must uphold a variety of laws, statutes, and executive orders⁵.

	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Title VI Program ⁶	Environmental Justice ⁷ (EJ)
How does it relate to transportation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure pedestrians with disabilities have opportunity to use the transportation system in an accessible and safe manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHWA Title VI Program is broader than the statute and encompasses race, color, national origin, sex, age, limited English proficiency, low-income, and disability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection and analysis; Assess adverse impacts on minority and/or low-income populations.
Who must follow?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and local governments All public organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and local governments that receive federal grants and aid. Governmental organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal agencies
What are agencies required to provide?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible buildings, buses, trains, sidewalks, and more. When agencies provide transportation options, they must be accessible for persons with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title VI Plan. Notice to the public. Translation/interpreters for people with limited English proficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful public participation. Adopt USDOT EJ Principles.
Where can you get involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public meetings for new projects. State or local disability councils File a complaint with a local, state, or federal agency if something is not accessible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public meetings when government organizations do transportation planning. Public meetings during the NEPA process. File a complaint with a local, state, or federal agency if you feel a project discriminates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public meetings for projects affecting your community.

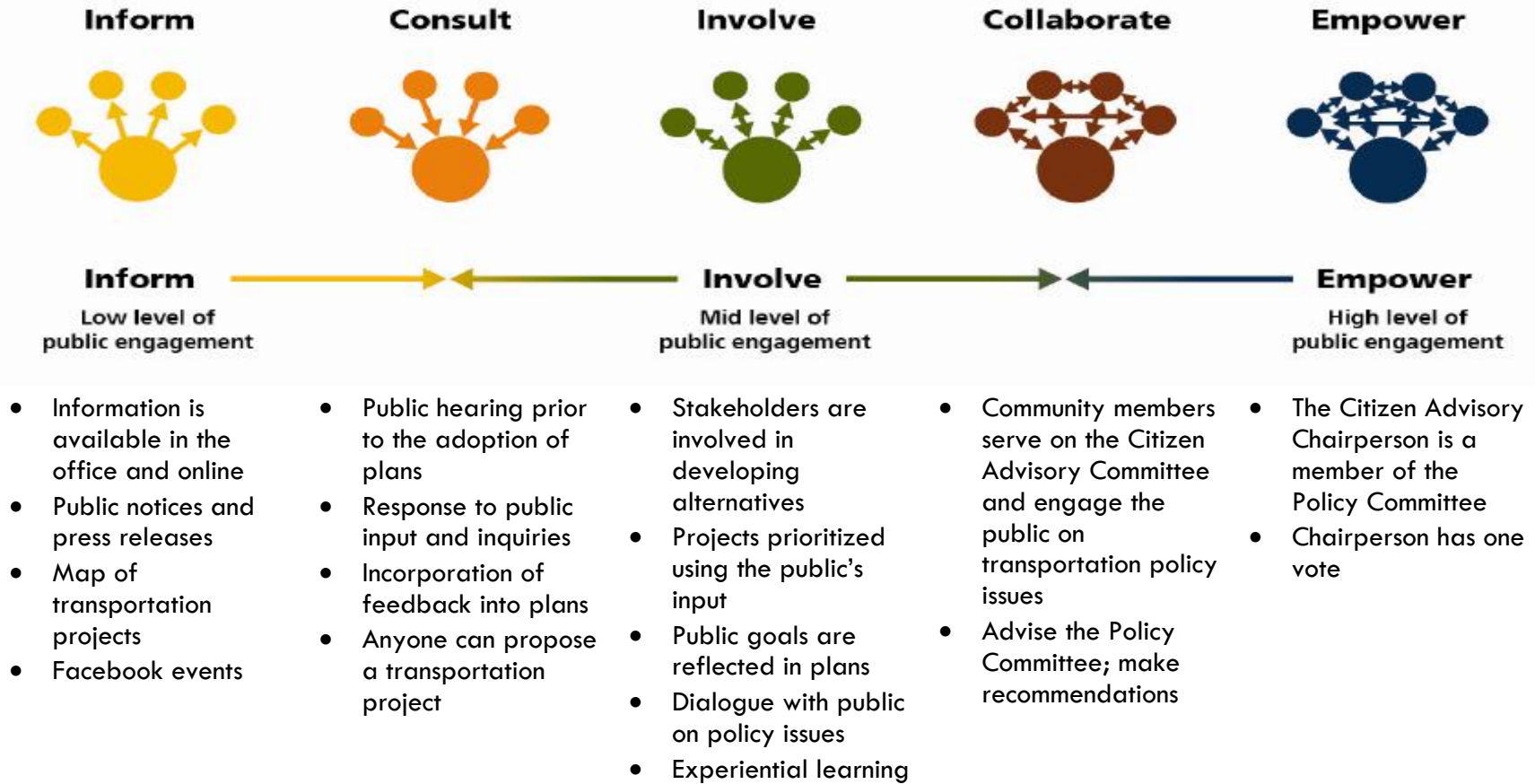
⁵ FHWA and FTA provide additional resources via the Office of Civil Rights. This chart is adapted from 2017 Update of Transportation Briefing Book.

⁶ To learn more about Title VI, visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/Planning/pdfs/TitleVI.pdf>.

⁷ To learn more about Environmental Justice, visit https://www.columbusga.gov/planning/enviro_justice.htm.

Spectrum of Public Participation

The International Association for Public Participation places efforts to engage the public along a spectrum⁸ reflecting increasing impact on decision-making. CPCMPO decisions range from informal to formal and are made by high level authorities as well as MPO staff. We strive to obtain the right level of participation depending on the type of decision being made. Below are examples of how we engage the public along this continuum.



⁸ https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf

Performance Measures

Our Goal is to Deliver an Excellent Public Involvement Process Responsive to the Needs of the Community and Decision-makers⁹.

Provide Equitable Access to Transportation Decision-Making.

- 1.1 Meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- 1.2 Visualization techniques are employed to describe plans.
- 1.3 Information is available online and in electronically accessible formats.
- 1.4 CPCMPO products are published to allow for a 30-45 day comment period.
- 1.5 Information, in languages other than English, is provided where needed.
- 1.6 Provide equitable results in transportation that supports housing and economic development.

Continuously Engage the Public on Transportation Issues.

- 2.1 Community Characteristics Interactive Map is published and updated annually.
- 2.2 Calendar of prioritized community events is published quarterly.
- 2.3 Experiential techniques are used to engage the community on policy issues.
- 2.4 Citizens Advisory Committee actively engages the community on policy issues.
- 2.5 Updating policies that promote surface transportation systems that will better connect housing and employment.

Reach Communities Underserved by Transportation Planning.

- 3.1 CPMPO pursues initiatives that reach beyond the usual stakeholders and interest groups.
- 3.2 CPCMPO leverages relationships with organizations working with communities and users identified as underserved by transportation planning.
- 3.3 List of community-based organizations for targeted outreach and partnership is published quarterly.
- 3.4 Use transportation planning process to equitably address the integration of transportation, with housing and economic development strategies through a process that provides for effective integration.

Evaluate and Improve Public Participation Efforts and Outcomes.

- 4.1 After Action Report is completed no later than 2 weeks after outreach activities.
- 4.2 After Action Reports include questions to measure implementation of public participation performance measures.
- 4.3 Public Involvement Evaluation Report is published annually to aid in evaluation.
- 4.4 Add officials responsible for local housing and economic development to Committees.

⁹ CPCMPO achieves desired outcomes by balancing the development of required planning products and the available resources of funds and staff time.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS

Calendar of Prioritized Community Events¹⁰

Month	Event	Policy Opportunity
January	MLK Celebration	Equity, Environmental Justice, Title VI
February	Black History Month Programs Arbor Day Programs Heart Health Month	Equity, Environmental Justice, Title VI Air Quality, Climate Change, Environment Land Use, Health, Equity, Aging
March	Safe Routes to School Literacy Alliance Programs	Safety, Equity, Land Use, Congestion Management Equity, limited English proficiency
April	Creative South Recycling Center Earth Day	Equity, Youth Air Quality, Climate Change, Environment, Land Use
May	Jane's Walk National Bike Month	Equity, Land Use Safety, Equity, Land Use, Congestion Management
June	Community Bike Ride Juneteenth	Equity, Congestion Management, Safety Equity, Environmental Justice, Title VI
July	Fort Moore Fourth of July	Equity, Military, Safety, Congestion
August	Back to School	Safety, Children, Land Use
September	Hispanic Heritage Festival CSU Health Conference	Equity, limited English proficiency Equity, Youth, Environmental Justice
October	Uptown Spooktacular Way Down Film Festival Community Bike Ride	Equity, Children Equity, Youth Equity, Environmental Justice, Title VI
November	National Planning Month Let's Grow STEAM	Land Use, Equity Equity, Children
December	Safe Kids Helmet Giveaway Mr. Jackson's Bike Giveaway	Safety, Equity, Environmental Justice, Title VI Equity, Environmental Justice, Title VI

Invite MPO staff to attend your community event by emailing mixen.michael@columbusga.org.

¹⁰ For specific recommendations, staff should reference and select, where appropriate, events recommended in the public comments section of this plan.

Community Characteristics Interactive Map

Transportation Planning recognizes the adverse impacts of transportation projects of the past on communities who did not have a voice in previous decision-making processes. To engage the public, we first identify who we need to reach. We analyze the geographic distribution of various indicators to identify underserved communities in the CPCMPO area at the Census tract level. Staff combines indicators to understand which areas demonstrate an elevated presence of indicators. An overlay of transportation facilities and services assists the MPO in tailoring public involvement based on benefits and burdens. The map will be updated annually to coincide with the annual release of American Community Survey (ACS) datasets. The goal is to continue to develop the analysis into a robust community characteristics inventory. The following are the indicators we propose including in the initial analysis.

Population & Employment	Age ¹¹	Transportation Means	Minority	Ability
Population Households Density Where are the jobs Where workers live	Children 5-14 Youth 15-24 Seniors 75+	Commute by Walking, Bicycling, and Transit No vehicle in households	Non-Hispanic Minority Hispanic/Latino Origin Female Head of Household	Low income and poverty Persons with disabilities Limited English Speaking Renter occupied
US Census Sources: Decennial, ACS 5-year estimates (2018-2022), scheduled to be released on December 7, 2023				

Additional Location-based Tools

Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT)

The Housing and Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index combines the costs of housing and transportation showing a more realistic measure of affordability. The data can be viewed from the Census block level to the Metro region.

Response Outreach Area Mapper (ROAM)

This Census tool uses a low response score to identify hard-to-survey populations. The information is used to tailor communication, partner with community-based organizations, and adjust field practices. CPCMPO values using this resource for the similar purpose of public engagement.

¹¹ Research shows that these age groups have non-automobile travel demands often unmet in auto-centric decision-making.

Experiential Techniques

An effective public involvement program continually brings the public along on transportation matters. CPCMPO helps the public learn about transportation policy issues by using a variety of techniques and strategies. Experiential or participatory learning is particularly effective¹². CPCMPO will incorporate the following techniques into public participation efforts.

- Demonstration and Pop-up projects
- Simulation
- Scenario testing
- Interactive maps
- High Quality Surveys
- Charrettes and visioning
- Walking audits and tours
- Bike Rides
- Transit experiences
- Voting and prioritizing activities
- Maker activities

*Tell me, and I forget.
Teach me, and I remember.
Involve Me, and I Learn.*

Partnering with Community-Based Organizations

Community based organizations are formed by and for people in a community to advance their shared interests and local level concerns¹³. CPCMPO staff will attend regularly scheduled meetings to present relevant transportation information and gather input. Staff will work with CPCMPO Committee members to publish a quarterly schedule of community-based organization opportunities for targeted outreach¹⁴.

¹² Incorporating Qualitative Data in the Planning Process: Improving Project Delivery and Outcomes. Federal Highway Administration, March 2017.

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/qualitative_data/fhwahep17075.pdf

¹³ FHWA describes how MPOs can improve planning capacity by partnering with Community-Based Organizations.

https://www.planning.dot.gov/publicinvolvement/pi_documents/1b-a.asp

¹⁴ For specific recommendations, staff should reference and select, where appropriate, organizations recommended in the public comments section of this plan.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

After Action Report

In order to evaluate the outcomes of public participation efforts by CPCMPO, staff records activities using an After-Action Report (AAR). We use a Google Form; an efficient and collaborative tool for collecting and analyzing responses. Questions on the AAR measure public participation performance objectives¹⁵. Click [here](#) to view the AAR.

QUESTION #	RESPONSE REQUESTED	OBJECTIVES MEASURED
1	Email address of responder	1.1, 4.2
2	Date	1.1, 4.2
3	Start Time	1.1, 4.2
4	End Time	1.1, 4.2
5	Location	1.1, 4.2
6	Staff or Committee members who worked the event/activity?	1.5, 2.4, 4.2
7	How did MPO notify participants?	1.3, 1.4
8	If applicable, list publication dates of public notices for this meeting/event.	1.3, 1.4
9	What was the format of the event/activity?	1.2, 2.3
10	Was format determined by MPO?	1.2, 2.3
11	Is this event on the MPO calendar of prioritized community events?	2.2
12	Which visualization techniques were used?	1.2
13	Which experiential techniques were used?	2.3
14	Which policy and planning issues were addressed?	2.3, 2.4
15	Number of attendees or participants reached?	3.1, 3.2, 4.2
16	Characteristics of the people reached.	1.3, 4.2
17	Which partners were involved?	2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2
18	List Community-Based Organizations you partnered with.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3
19(1)	Was the location ADA accessible?	1.1
19(2)	Was the location conveniently located for your audience?	1.1
19(3)	Was the location reachable by transit and paratransit?	1.1, 4.2
19(4)	Did you collect contact information?	1.3, 4.3
19(5)	Did you provide a 30–45-day comment period?	1.3, 1.4

¹⁵ Performance based planning involves not only the collection of data, but also the reporting and evaluating of the data in order to understand how well approaches are working and inform future decision making. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/performance_based_planning/pbpp_guidebook/page09.cfm

Public Involvement Evaluation Report (PIER)

To report results and progress of public outreach, the CPCMPO analyzes the public outreach activities of the previous year and packages them into a Public Involvement Evaluation Report (PIER). The format of PIER will be an infographic, short newsletter, or similar communication tool presenting the information in a clear and concise manner. Contents of PIER include:

- ✓ Summary of efforts and outcomes in comparison to performance objectives using data collected from the After-Action Report responses. The Google Form automatically populates a spreadsheet.
- ✓ Summary of social media and website statistics.
- ✓ Analysis of cost effectiveness of strategies used.
- ✓ Engaging format such as an infographic, newsletter, and other reader-friendly layouts.
- ✓ Easy to understand graphics and data visualizations.
- ✓ Story or highlights of specific examples of engaging the public—good ones as well as lessons learned.
- ✓ Clear, easy to understand language.
- ✓ Published annually.

LEARN MORE

Online and Social Media

Columbus Plans and MPO Website. <https://www.columbusga.gov/Planning/Trans.htm>

Columbus Plans and MPO Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/columbus.plans/>

Georgia Department of Transportation Social Media Hub. <http://www.dot.ga.gov/PS/Public/SocialHub>

Alabama Department of Transportation. <https://www.dot.state.al.us/>

Phenix City. <https://phenixcityal.us/>

Publications

Briefing Book: The Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues. US Department of Transportation, 2019.

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing_book/fhwahep18015.pdf

Public Involvement Plan. Georgia Department of Transportation, 2021.

<http://www.dot.ga.gov/PartnerSmart/DesignManuals/Environmental/Public%20Involvement%20Plan/PublicInvolvementPlan.pdf>

Every Place Counts Leadership Academy: Transportation Toolkit. US Department of Transportation.

<https://www.transportation.gov/leadershipacademy>

DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

Interested Parties

MPO Staff developed a draft of this Public Participation Plan in consultation with interested parties outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations and those recommended by the MPO committees. Those parties include:

- ✓ Individuals
- ✓ Affected public agencies
- ✓ Representatives of public transportation employees
- ✓ Representatives of users of public transportation
- ✓ Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
- ✓ Representatives of the disabled
- ✓ CPCMPO Committee Members

Public Review Process

MPO staff provided a 45-day public comment period from 15 Aug – 3 October 2023. The Draft Public Participation Plan was available via the following:

- Columbus Plans website www.columbusga.gov/planning
- Columbus Plans Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/columbus.plans/>
- Email to CPCMPO Committee Members
- Email to Columbus Planning Department mixen.michael@columbusga.org
- Link to a Google Form to provide feedback: [After Action Report Public Participation \(google.com\)](#)
- Availability of email address for comments at mixen.michael@columbusga.org

Public Comments (As of 6 Oct 2023) - The following table contains the comments submitted via the electronic Google Form. MPO Staff designed the form to request general comments as well as recommendations for events, organizations, and social media that the MPO should pursue for outreach efforts. No comments were received.

Committee Comments (As of 6 Oct 2023) - MPO staff requested comments from CPCMPO Committee Members. We appreciate receiving the following comment.

Document Title:		CPCMPO Draft 2023-2026 Participation Plan		MPO		Columbus-Phenix City	
Document Date:		July Draft		Comment Date:			
Comment #	PDF Page	Section	¶	Comment	MPO Response	New Page	
1		General		<p>Add information on public meetings, where they are held, where documents can be viewed and/or copies obtained for review; social media sites used.</p> <p>Add language on participating in public meetings virtually.</p>	Public meetings will be held in Government Buildings, Public Libraries, or Schools. Documents are available in print at the Columbus Planning Department. Copies of drafts and final documents will also be loaded onto the web site and will be announced on the website. All meeting sites will ADA approved. When a public meeting is also presented virtually (a decision made by the Committee Chair) then this will be made in the public announcement.		
2	12	CPCMPO Planning Activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Links should be updated to the current documents. - Add the public review period for amendments to the TIP, UPWP, MTP. - Add language regarding significant comments and repost a document for review. - Add how often the CMP is updated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Done and will be checked on a quarterly basis. - Done. - All significant comments are reviewed by the MPO staff and submitted to the TCC and PCC for approval. Significant changes are reposted for public review. - Updated as needed. 	#12	
3	13	Committee Structure		- Consider adding language similar to what is in the UPWP for the responsibilities of the committees to provide more specifics on the roles/responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This language has been added and is on page 14. - Members are selected based on their position within the MPO structure i.e. the Columbus Mayor is always the Chair of the PCC and the Director of Planning, Columbus is always the chair of the TCC. 	#14	

				- Recommend stating how members of the PC are selected.		
4	14	Public Involvement Plan		Add language regarding the required quorum for voting members on action items.	Per each committees' by-laws quorums are 10 for the TCC and 7 for the PCC. UPWP link: https://www.columbusga.gov/Planning/pdfs/Final%202024%20UPWP.pdf	
5	16	Spectrum of Public Participation		What are the types of decisions relative to the different spectrum levels (examples)?	This is open to the organizations making the types of decisions and would be made relative what they want to affect.	
6	21	How are we doing		The link does not go to a report. The document is more of a questionnaire. Be clear on what will be seen.	The question is "How are we doing?" This is the location the public can go to and provide their input where it will be consolidated at the end of the year and then put in a report.	
7	22	Public Involvement Evaluation Report		If the public can view the report, state where it can be found.	The location of the report will be on the MPO/Transportation page under documents once all the data has been collected.	
8	23	Learn More		The page could not be found for the GDOT Social Media Hub.	Replaced the link to GDOT Social Media	
9	23	Publications		The link for the Briefing Book did not work. Had to copy and paste it. Update the date of the Public Involvement Plan. The link goes to the 2021 document.	Replaced the link to GDOT TPCB Briefing Book Changed date from 2016 to 2021	

Prepared by the Columbus-Phenix City Metropolitan Planning Organization

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