

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PLAN
FOR THE
SOUTHEAST WIREGRASS AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING
ORGANIZATION

I. Principles

As part of the transportation planning process, the Southeast Wiregrass Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will:

- Encourage and accommodate public participation in all aspects of transportation planning decision making.
- Maintain honesty and integrity in the planning process.
- Seek to insure that all individuals and groups have the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning decision making process irrespective of race, religion, color, sex, national origin or physical handicap.
- Assure that no individual or group will be experience disproportionately adverse impacts as a result of the transportation planning process or the implementation of any plans resulting from the transportation planning process as a result of race, religion, color, sex, national origin or physical handicap.

II. Guidelines

“The Model Plan for Public Participation,” which is included as an Appendix to this plan, shall be a resource guide for the MPO’s transportation decision making process.

III. Day-to-day Practices

(A) Availability of Documents, Records and Staff

1. Location of Documents

Planning Office
Suite 305
Dothan Civic Center
126 North St. Andrews Street
Dothan, AL 36303

2. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

3. **Phone:** (334) 615-4410
FAX: (334) 615-4419

4. Documents

The following documents are available for public review: meeting agendas and minutes; Long Range Transportation Plan; Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP); Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); payment invoices; semi-annual reports; maps; construction plans for approved projects; other documents related to MPO activities; Records and documents may be copied or duplicated for a nominal charge.

5. MPO Staff

- (a) **Assistance:** The MPO staff is available during normal office hours to provide assistance in reviewing documents and answering questions about the transportation planning program.
- (b) **Public Speaking:** The MPO staff is available to speak to interested civic, professional, and other groups about the transportation planning program.

B. Media

1. The MPO staff will work with local media to disseminate information about the transportation planning program and the activities of the MPO.
2. The MPO staff will provide local news media copies of MPO materials, including: meeting announcements, proposed plans and meeting agendas.
3. The local media will be encouraged to publicize MPO meetings and activities through public service announcements and news articles. The MPO staff will accommodate and assist the media in their efforts.

C. Public Involvement Meetings

1. Public involvement meetings will be held before the formal consideration of the TIP, updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan and other major transportation planning activities. The purpose of the meetings is to provide the public the opportunity to ask

questions about the transportation planning program and to influence the transportation planning process.

2. Public involvement meetings will be conducted as follows:

- (a) **Location:** Public involvement meetings will be held at generally convenient times and locations.
- (b) **Format:** Public involvement meetings will generally have an open house format. The MPO staff will be available to answer questions and accept comments and recommendations. Attendees will be able to make oral or written comments. The MPO staff will make available materials to assist the public in understanding and evaluating the transportation planning program.

On occasion, more formal formats may be used for public involvement meetings.

- (c) **Publicity:** Public meetings will be advertised in The Dothan Eagle in the legal section and as a display ad. Public notices will be posted at the Dothan Civic Center and the Houston-Love Memorial Library. Public notices will be made available to member MPO governments and organizations for public display. Local media will be encouraged to publicize meetings in articles, news reports and public service announcements.

D. MPO Meetings

MPO meetings will be open to the public and media. MPO meetings will generally be held in the City Commission Chambers on the second floor of the Dothan Civic Center.

E. State and Federal Agencies

The MPO staff is available to assist the public and media contact the Alabama Department of Transportation and the U. S. Department of Transportation.

F. Citizen Advisory Committee

A Citizen Advisory Committee, composed of appointees of the member governments of the MPO, will serve as a liaison between the MPO and the public. The MPO staff is available to the Citizens Advisory Committee to provide information requested by the Committee. The Committee shall be

authorized to make recommendations to the MPO. The chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee shall be a non-voting member of the technical Advisory Committee.

G. Internet

MPO documents, including proposed plans, agendas and other materials, will be posted on the City of Dothan web site at *www.dothan.org*.

IV. Review of Effectiveness of Public Participation and Environmental Justice Plan

A. On-going Evaluation

The MPO will evaluate the effectiveness of its Public Involvement and Environmental Justices strategies and practices on an on-going basis. As part of this evaluation process, the MPO will solicit comments and suggestions from the public on the effectiveness of those strategies and practices and how they could be improved or supplemented by other methods.

B. Revisions and Amendments

At least every two years, the Public Participation and Environmental Justice Plan will be reviewed to ensure that appropriate changes are being made. This shall not preclude the MPO from making changes prior to the biennial review if it is determined that changes are needed to improve the effectiveness of the Plan.