



Valdosta- Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization Participation Plan

Title VI Compliance Plan
Limited-English Proficiency Plan



Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization Participation Plan

**Includes:
Limited-English Proficiency Plan
and
Title VI Compliance Plan**

Adopted: September 7, 2016



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This document is prepared in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

VLMPPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. VLMPPO's website (www.sgrc.us/transportation) may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages or formats, if requested.

RESOLUTION FY2017-4
VALDOSTA-LOWNDES
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION TO Amend the Participation Plan including the Limited-English Proficiency Plan and the Title VI Compliance Plan

WHEREAS, in accordance with the U.S. Bureau of the Census officially designated Urbanized Area Boundaries established May 1, 2002, and subsequently updated; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission has been designated by the Governor of Georgia as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Valdosta-Lowndes Urbanized Area in accordance with Federal requirements of the Title 23, Section 134 of the United States Code to have a Cooperative, Comprehensive, and Continuous transportation planning process; and

WHEREAS, the MPO conducts federally required transportation planning activities that will improve the transportation system and help coordinate the area's future growth within the area bounded, at minimum, by the existing Urbanized Area plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within the next 20 years; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission is a recipient of federal funding and as required in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other related statutes, Executive Orders and regulations to develop a Title VI Compliance Plan and Limited English Proficiency Plan

WHEREAS, after the 2010 Decennial Census the Valdosta Urbanized Area was expanded to include portions of Brooks County; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization's Policy Committee amend this Participation Plan including a Limited-English Proficiency Plan and Title VI Compliance Plan as required by Title 23 (USC 134 Section 450.308) pursuant to the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Executive Order 13166; Title 50 OCGA; and other related statutes, Executive Orders and regulations.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee at a meeting held on September 7, 2016.



John Gayle, Mayor, City of Valdosta
Chair, Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee

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Introduction

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a transportation policy decision-making organization made up of representatives from local governments, transportation agencies, and citizens appointed to serve in an advisory capacity. Since its inception the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization has sought to foster an environment that facilitates an optimal collaborative process between local officials and citizens alike.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 required the formation of an MPO for any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000. MPOs were created to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs were based on a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) planning process. Federal funding for transportation projects and programs are channeled through this planning process.

On May 1, 2002, the U. S. Bureau of the Census designated Valdosta, Georgia as a new Urbanized Area. After meeting the population threshold the Valdosta Urbanized Area (UZA) is now required by Title 23, Section 134 of the United States Code to have a comprehensive transportation planning process to be eligible for federal transportation funds.



Through resolutions adopted by the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners and the Mayor and Council of the City of Valdosta, and upon request of the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Governor of Georgia designated the Southern Georgia Regional Commission as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Valdosta UZA and as the recipient of Federal transportation planning funds.



Subsequent to this designation, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission established the committees of the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization. These committees include a Policy Committee, a Technical Advisory Committee, and a Citizen Advisory Committee.

Recently, Jesse Lane, a Valdosta State University graduate student completed a review of this Participation Plan. His review included a review of literature (from both academic sources and federal transportation agencies) to look for any potential participation methods that would be effective in the area and for populations of which transportation issues could be an issue in environmental justice. He is part of the M. S. program in Applied Sociology at Valdosta State University and within this program one of the final requirements is to use the sociological techniques and practices taught in a real world setting, which is the overall focus of this degree.

Importance of Public Involvement

Some of the main avenues through which the public is involved in the process include:

- Seeking outreach through physical exposure with many community groups and organizations as well as through the use of newsletters, television, radio, newspapers, and magazines to help spread awareness. This may also include piggy-backing on other events such as high school and college football games. These strategies and others are listed in the Strategies and Techniques section and are advised by the Transportation Review Board as the state of practice according to their most recent national survey.¹
- Ongoing dialog both in person and through other means of communication such as websites and newer relevant technologies like texting and apps open up the possibilities of real time polling, voting, and participation through live streaming of events. These newer techniques of communication are becoming increasingly more pertinent to affected populations which according to the Pew Foundation are “more likely than other groups to use their phones as their main source of the internet.”²

Public involvement is integral to the MPO’s transportation planning mission. Without meaningful public involvement, there is a risk of making less than optimal decisions. With public involvement it is possible to make a lasting contribution to Valdosta-Lowndes County area’s quality of life. Public Involvement is more than meeting a requirement of an agency or a means of fulfilling a statutory obligation. Neglecting public involvement can result in unnecessary delays, litigation and can erode public trust. True public involvement is central to good decision making.

One aspect of public involvement that is absolutely essential is Environmental Justice. Under this term falls the responsibility of giving all interested parties reasonable opportunities to comment on transportation planning activities including convenient and accessible locations as well as access to electronic formats. This is especially true for prevention of discrimination based on disabilities, race, color, national origin, sex, age, limited English or non-English speaking persons, and low-income populations.



1 U. S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. 2015. Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decisionmaking. Retrieved Oct. 15, 2015.

(http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/public_involvement/publications/pi_t echniques/fhwahep15044.pdf)

2 Transportation Research Board. 2013. Update on the State of the Practice: Public Involvement in the 21st Century Prepared by: TRB Committee on Public Involvement in Transportation ADA60. Retrieved Oct. 15, 2015.

Purpose of the Participation Plan

The Participation Plan (PP) is a living document for both citizens and planners alike to use for finding the exact processes through which the MPO facilitates democratic solutions to transportation issues. It is defined under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) as the process or framework for providing citizens, affected public agencies and other associated stakeholders with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. In an effort to better integrate Title VI requirements and Limited-English Proficiency planning efforts to public participation, these elements are also included in this plan. As all three elements relate to one another and how the VLMPO communicates and engages the public they are presented here as one plan, with common policies and strategies to implement each element.

Organization of the MPO

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) is the designated MPO for the Valdosta Urbanized Area. The Valdosta-Lowndes MPO (VLMPO) is mandated by the Federal Highway Act of 1962 (and subsequent re-authorizations) to perform the transportation planning activities within the urbanized area. The legislation ensures that there will be a "continuing, cooperative and comprehensive" (referred to as "3-C") planning process involving federal, state and local agencies, as well as citizens and other affected stakeholders.

The process involves collaboration among various governmental agencies and results in a consensus regarding the transportation plans for that urbanized area. Figure 1 (on the following page) displays the Valdosta Urbanized Area and Metropolitan Planning Area which includes all of Lowndes County and portions of Berrien, Brooks and Lanier Counties. The VLMPO is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (updated in December 2015) and bylaws for each of the committees that

outline the various responsibilities for each local government, the Georgia Department of Transportation and the SGRC (MOU) and the various MPO committees (bylaws). These roles and responsibilities are either requirements of FAST Act and other federal regulations or are put in place as a part of best practices for public participation and other parts of the planning process.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee is a forum for cooperative decision making by principal elected and appointed officials of the general purpose local governments and inter-modal transportation providers. The Policy Committee is also responsible for taking into consideration the recommendations from the Citizen's Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee when adopting plans or setting policy. The Policy Committee has final authority in the matters of policy and adoption of plans.

The Policy Committee, with input from the Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, annually revises and adopts the Transportation Improvement Program and other documents, resolutions, amendments, etc. in order to comply with the federal regulations.



Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) membership includes staff from various federal, state, and local agencies and other associations who have a technical knowledge of transportation or planning. The TAC functions

to ensure the involvement of all operation departments, advisory agencies, and multi-modal transportation providers involved with the planning process and subsequent implementation of plans. The TAC evaluates transportation plans and projects based on whether or not they are technically warranted and financially feasible.

Citizen's Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) consists of volunteers who are interested in transportation issues. The CAC is responsible for keeping the Policy Committee informed of the community's perspective and also provides information to the community about

transportation policies and issues. The CAC ensures that the values and interests of the communities of the area are taken into consideration in the planning process. While the representation on the CAC is limited to Lowndes County representatives as the largest county in the region, the VLMPO staff works in other ways to involve and engage the public in the other counties. This engagement includes opportunism to speak at public meetings of the MPO, annual meetings with the County Commissioners and/or staff, or other specific outreach efforts.

Current membership rosters of all VLMPO Committees are available on the website at www.sgrc.us.

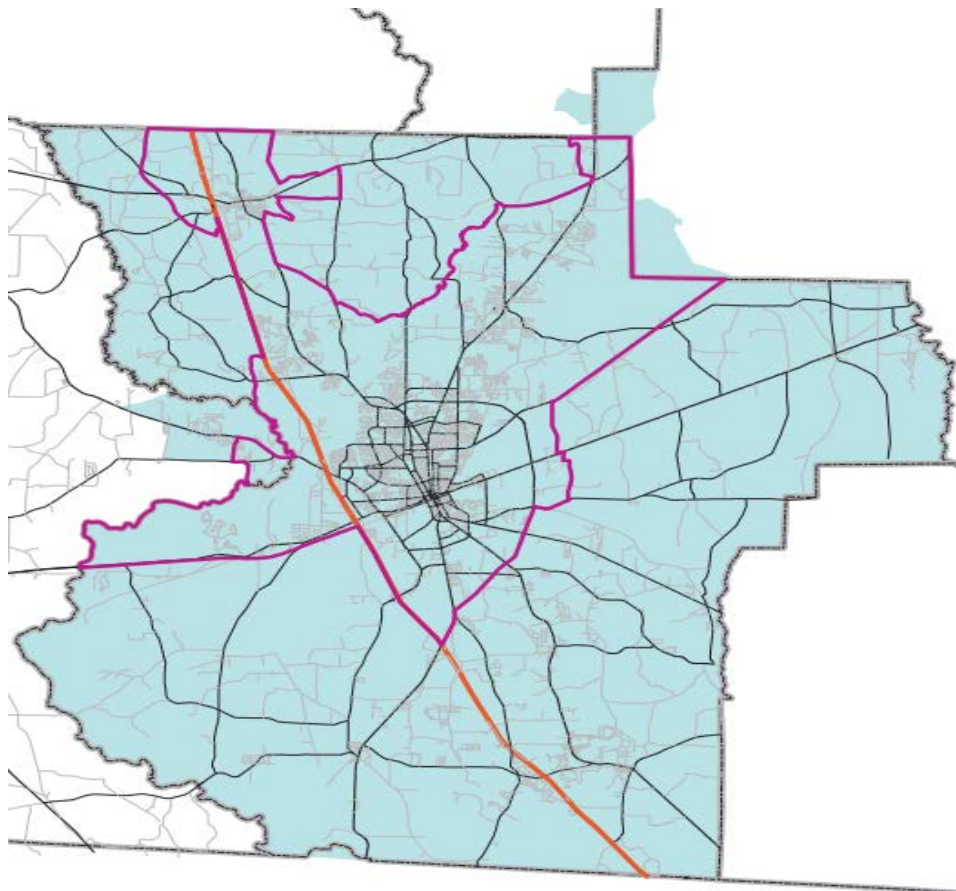


Figure 1 Valdosta-Lowndes MPO Metropolitan Planning Area (blue) and Urbanized Area (purple).

Lowndes County Demographics

The demographics of a community are important when evaluating public engagement in any planning activity. The tables below show a snapshot of the demographic information about Lowndes County, Georgia.

Race: 2014 ACS 5-year estimates Lowndes County Georgia	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	112,515	*****
White alone	65,134	+/-406
Black or African American alone	40,703	+/-579
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	109	+/-47
Asian alone	1,741	+/-163
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	40	+/-30
Some other race alone	1,798	+/-397
Two or more races:	2,990	+/-609
Two races including Some other race	617	+/-274
Two races excluding Some other race, and three or more races	2,373	+/-550



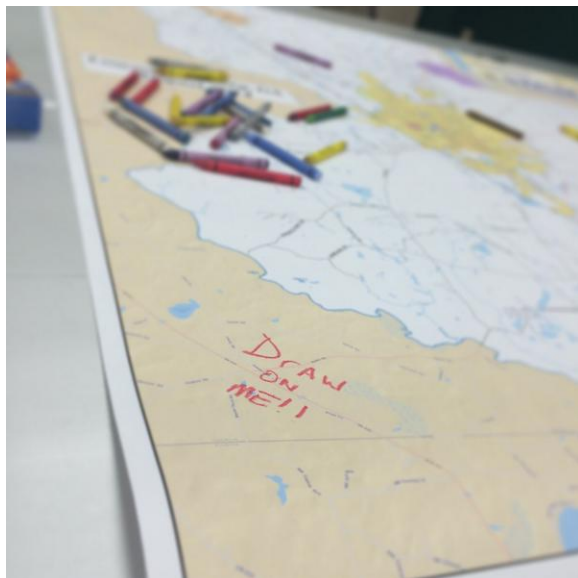
Figure 2 Staff Speaking to a Group of Interested Citizens

Household Income: 2014 ACS 5-year estimates Lowndes County Georgia	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total	39,718	+/-570
Less than \$10,000	11.8%	+/-1.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	7.9%	+/-1.0
\$15,000 to \$24,999	14.3%	+/-1.2
\$25,000 to \$34,999	13.5%	+/-1.4
\$35,000 to \$49,999	14.4%	+/-1.5
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.1%	+/-1.3
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.5%	+/-1.1
\$100,000 to \$149,999	8.3%	+/-0.9
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2.6%	+/-0.5
\$200,000 or more	1.8%	+/-0.4
Median income (dollars)	37,248	+/-1,611
Mean income (dollars)	52,624	+/-1,801

Age: 2014 ACS 5-year estimates Lowndes County Georgia	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total population	112,515	*****
AGE		
Under 5 years	7.4%	+/-0.1
5 to 9 years	7.4%	+/-0.4
10 to 14 years	6.1%	+/-0.4
15 to 19 years	8.8%	+/-0.2
20 to 24 years	13.5%	+/-0.1
25 to 29 years	7.9%	+/-0.1
30 to 34 years	6.4%	+/-0.1
35 to 39 years	5.6%	+/-0.4
40 to 44 years	5.8%	+/-0.4
45 to 49 years	5.6%	+/-0.1
50 to 54 years	5.8%	+/-0.1
55 to 59 years	4.9%	+/-0.4
60 to 64 years	4.7%	+/-0.4
65 to 69 years	3.3%	+/-0.2
70 to 74 years	2.6%	+/-0.2
75 to 79 years	1.9%	+/-0.2
80 to 84 years	1.3%	+/-0.2
85 years and over	1.0%	+/-0.2
SUMMARY INDICATORS		
Median age (years)	29.4	+/-0.2

Transportation Planning Process

Transportation planning in the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Area provides the information, tools, and public input needed to enhance the performance of its transportation system. Transportation planning reflects the metropolitan area's vision for its future transportation needs. It includes consideration of possible strategies; an evaluation procedure that includes different viewpoints; participation by relevant transportation agencies and organizations; and open, timely and meaningful involvement of the public. Consideration of the links between transportation and other needs of the community are crucial in transportation decision making.



The overall goal of the Valdosta-Lowndes MPO is to maintain a continuing, comprehensive and cooperative transportation planning process. Led by three standing committees, the process is designed to encourage involvement by all interested groups, such as the business community, neighborhood associations, environmental organizations, social service agencies, educational institutions and the general public.

The MPO, in coordination with local governments, local transportation agencies, the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are responsible for conducting the transportation planning process. In 2013 the VLMPO in partnership with Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta completed the Common Community Vision for Greater Lowndes County. This public input effort was implemented to identify a common vision for the communities' transportation and land use planning efforts. The VLMPO has adopted (January 29, 2014) the following Common Community Vision (CCV):

"A resilient community where partnerships and coordination promote regional success in economic development, education, infrastructure, and a high quality of life."

It is essential to extend public participation to all interested citizens who are served by the transportation system and transportation services in the metropolitan area. This Participation Plan strives to fulfill at least one goal of the CCV, "to develop regional leadership in local governments that promotes transparency, citizen engagement, and coordinated delivery of government services."



Figure 3 The Transportation Planning Process

Federal and State Requirements

Several federal and state laws and regulations govern participation efforts of MPOs. This section describes those laws and how the VLMPO is working to meet these requirements.

FAST Act

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act stipulates that MPOs must have a participation plan that is developed in consultation with interested parties and provides all interested parties reasonable opportunities to comment on transportation planning activities. Methods for carrying out participation efforts included in the law at a minimum are to hold meetings at convenient, accessible locations and times employ visualization techniques to describe plans and to make information available in electronic accessible formats.

This PP outlines the VLMPO engagement methods, strategies and policies to carryout participation amongst all interested parties.

23 CFR 450.316

"(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies...and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process."

This PP is the documented process by which the VLMPO provides stakeholders and interested parties reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

"(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points..."

This PP outlines the procedures for public notice of MPO activities utilizing resources such as the local newspaper, websites, mailing lists, television and radio media outlets and other means.

"(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means..."

The VLMPO will maintain a website and use other resources such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), maps, videos, and other techniques to help the public visualize projects and the transportation planning process.

"(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;"

The VLMPO will hold events and meetings at ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible locations and will vary times to make it convenient for all members of the public to attend.

"(vi) Demonstrating...consideration and response to public input received..."

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved..."

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the

version that was made available for public comment...

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes... and"

Through the policies and techniques in this PP the VLMPO will consider and respond to comments received and will work to get input from those traditionally underserved. The VLMPO will actively coordinate with statewide and community stakeholders through the techniques in this PP.

"(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process"

The VLMPO will from time-to-time review and update this PP as needs of the community change including changes to the urbanized area boundaries as designated by the US Census Bureau.

"(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP...a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

The VLMPO will respond to significant public comments received and document the comments and responses as a part of the final draft of transportation plans and TIPs.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO... and shall be posted on the World Wide Web..."

As prescribed in Federal regulation and this PP the VLMPO will provide the required public

comment periods for all necessary publications.

"(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation...MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies..."

This PP outlines the process by which consultation agencies are involved in the transportation planning process carried out by the VLMPO.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d) provides that "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The scope of Title VI was expanded by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-209) to include all of a recipient's and contractor's programs or activities, whether federally assisted or not.³

The VLMPO, through this PP, strives to uphold and meet the requirements of the Civil Rights Act. This PP, including the LEP and Title VI Plans, provide the guidance for staff and the community in delivering appropriate public involvement opportunities.

Executive Order 12898

"Each Federal Agency shall 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 populations and low income populations."

Executive Order 12898 addresses Environmental Justice actions to be taken by agencies receiving federal funds to mitigate impacts in Minority and Low-Income Populations. The VLMPO, as a recipient of federal funds and as part of the public participation process works to engage minority and low-income populations to ensure that impacts from transportation projects are mitigated appropriately.

- How will the public involvement program reach low-income and minority communities?
- What statistics should be collected about minority and low-income communities, and how are they used to assess possible inequities?
- How are information and data incorporated into decision making?

The VLMPO approaches each of these questions differently for different aspects of the transportation planning process, however this PP outlines techniques and policies to help promote Environmental Justice and mitigate impacts on minority and low-income populations. An additional analysis of minority groups and other Environmental Justice characteristic is found in a separate report prepared by students from Valdosta State University titled: *A Report on Key Indicators for Establishing Environmental Justice in Transportation Planning in Lowndes County, 2015*. This report is available on the SGRC website at www.sgrc.us.

Executive Order 13166

"implement a system by which [limited English-proficient or "LEP"] persons can meaningfully access...services consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the fundamental mission of the agency."

Executive Order 13166 required federal agencies and any other entities that receive federal funds to make their activities accessible to non-English speaking persons and should be given equal opportunity to participate in programs and have access to services provided thereof. As a supplement to this PP a Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) has been developed by the VLMPO to identify languages other than English prominent in the community. The LEP and the PP outline techniques and policies to allow non-English speaking populations an opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires coordinating with the disabled community in the development and implementation of transportation services. Planners, engineers, and developers must provide access for the disabled at sidewalks, ramps, and street crossings and in parking or transit facilities. Moreover, persons with disabilities must be able to access the sites where public involvement activities occur as well as where information is presented.

This PP outlines the policies and techniques that the VLMPO will strive to meet to ensure that persons with disabilities are not denied access to the transportation planning process or to transportation projects and improvements developed cooperatively with the MPO.

Georgia Planning Act of 1989

Under the rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs created by the Georgia Planning Act, the planning process, "must be conducted with adequate public participation,

to insure that identified needs, vision, goals and implementation strategies adopted by the community are reflective of community values, drives and intentions and can be implemented (with adequate public support) through community investments, initiatives, regulations and programs.” The VLMPO strives to provide adequate public participation and meet the needs, vision, and goals set forth by the community.

Georgia Open Meetings Act

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission as the designated MPO for the Valdosta Urbanized Area must adhere to both federal and state laws and regulations for open meetings. The VLMPO will make its agendas and other information accessible according to the laws of the State of Georgia and as outlined in this PP.

Georgia Open Records Act

As described above the SGRC as an MPO is subject to both federal and state regulations. The VLMPO in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia makes information available in accessible formats as described by the policies and techniques in this PP. Any other documents or records subject to the Open Records Act are provided upon request and review in compliance with the law.

Common Community Vision

In January 2014, the VLMPO adopted a Common Community Vision for Greater Lowndes County. This document is meant to guide implementation of various planning efforts including the VLMPO long range transportation plans. The CCV contains goals for public participation and community engagement and those goals are incorporated into this Participation Plan as well.

Limited English Proficiency Plan

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or "LEP." Language for LEP individuals can be a barrier to accessing important benefits or services, understanding and exercising important rights, complying with applicable responsibilities, or understanding other information provided by federally funded programs and activities.

Title VI and Executive Order 13166

In certain circumstances, a failure to ensure that LEP persons can effectively participate in or benefit from federally assisted programs and activities may violate the prohibition against national origin discrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d) and the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Title VI regulations at 49 CFR Part 21.

To clarify existing requirements for LEP persons under Title VI, on August 11, 2000, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." The Executive Order requires each Federal agency to examine the services it provides and develop and implement a system by which LEP persons can meaningfully access those services consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the fundamental mission of the agency. Each Federal agency is also directed to work to ensure that recipients of Federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries. To this end, each agency must prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities (i.e., the services it provides directly to the public) by eligible LEP persons.

As a federal funding recipient, the VLMPO will comply with Executive Order 13166 by establishing an LEP using the framework provided by the U.S. Department of

Transportation (USDOT) and the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) publication, *Implementing the Department of Transportation's Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons* (April 13, 2007). The USDOT guidance outlines four factors recipients should apply to the various kinds of contacts they have with the public to assess language needs and decide what reasonable steps they should take to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the MPO, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee.
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the MPO.
3. The nature and importance of the MPO, activity, or service provided by the MPO to the LEP community.
4. The resources available to the MPO and costs.

The greater the number or proportion of eligible LEP persons; the greater the frequency with which they have contact with a program, activity, or service; and the greater the importance of that program, activity, or service, the more likely enhanced language services will be needed. Smaller recipients with more limited budgets are typically not expected to provide the same level of language service as larger recipients with larger budgets. The intent of DOT's guidance is to suggest a balance that ensures meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on small organizations and local governments.

LEP Assessment

In developing this plan, the VLMPO assessed each of these four factors, mentioned

previously, as they relate to the Lowndes County portion of the Metropolitan Planning Area (Berrien, Brooks, and Lanier portions are too small to have relevant statistics, they are assumed to be similar in proportion to Lowndes County as a whole).

Factor 1:

The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the MPO, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee.

The planning area of the VLMPO consists of the cities of Valdosta, Remerton, Hahira, Dasher and Lake Park, as well as Lowndes, Brooks, Lanier, and Berrien Counties. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010-2014 American Community Survey), the primary language for Lowndes County is English, but 6.1% of people speak a language other than English at home. Spanish is the most common other language spoken at home in Lowndes County with more than 3,770 persons identified.

Table 1 Language Other than English Spoken at Home in Lowndes County.

	05-09 ACS	10-14 ACS
Estimate	5,571	6,347
Margin of Error	+/-567	+/-1,169
Lowndes County %	5.9%	6.1%
United States %	19.6%	20.9%

A secondary source of LEP information is school enrollment data. In the 2015-2016 school year the Lowndes and Valdosta school systems had 2.21% and 2.2%, respectively of their students enrolled in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs, indicating a Limited-English Proficiency.

Factor 2:

The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the MPO.

The VLMPO has not received any formal requests by LEP individuals for language translation of any document nor for an

interpreter at any public meeting since first being designated as an MPO in 2002. The VLMPO does provide a Google translator on its Webpage to help facilitate document translation. The VLMPO also advertises TDD services on its website. In all public notices, the VLMPO includes the following language: “Si usted necesita la ayuda de un traductor del idioma español, por favor comuníquese con la SGRC al teléfono 229-333-5277, cuando menos 1 semana antes de la junta.” which reads: “If you need the help of a translator of Spanish language, please contact the SGRC at 229-333-5277, at least 1 week before the meeting.”

Factor 3:

The nature and importance of the MPO, activity, or service provided by the MPO to the LEP community.

The VLMPO uses Federal funds to plan for transportation projects and does not provide any direct service or program that requires vital, immediate or emergency assistance, such as medical treatment or services for basic needs (like food or shelter).

The VLMPO is mandated by the Federal government to create and maintain three key documents: a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) outlining MPO activities, a short-term four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) which covers at least 20 years. VLMPO has a Participation Plan (PP) which outlines strategies and techniques used to garner the input of all residents who can shape the planning process or wish to know more about the direction of transportation planning and how it will affect them.

Factor 4:

The resources available to the MPO and overall costs.

The final factor weighs the previous factors to assess the needs of LEP individuals against the resources available to the MPO providing assistance in a language other than English.

The VLMPO does have a significant number of LEP residents within Lowndes County but historically the frequency of contact with the MPO has been low. Full translation of major MPO documents would be prohibitively expensive. The VLMPO has been committed to the principle of inclusivity and used more cost-effective means of outreach, such as the Google translator as mentioned earlier. Should translation services be required in the future, the VLMPO will seek out translation and interpretation services and exhaust all reasonable resources to accommodate the needs of the LEP populations. The VLMPO will continue to develop relationships with organizations that serve non-English speaking populations to encourage participation by the organizations and the interests they represent to participate in the transportation planning process.

LEP Implementation Plan

The VLMPO does not produce vital documents requiring LEP compliance as defined by the US Department of Transportation: "A document will be considered vital if it contains information that is critical for obtaining federal services and/or benefits, or is required by law." (Federal Register, January 22, 2001) It is recognized, however, that outreach efforts may require the MPO to survey/access the needs of the LEP population to determine whether certain critical outreach materials should be translated into other languages as the need arises in the future.

There are various tools and strategies the VLMPO can use to help ensure that the needs of an LEP population are addressed. The following strategies and tools outline the efforts the VLMPO will undertake to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

Identifying Persons who may need Language Assistance

When the VLMPO sponsors a public function, a staff member or designee will greet and briefly speak to each attendee, informally gauging the attendee's ability to speak and understand English, he or she will ask a question that requires a full sentence reply.

The VLMPO may use the Census Bureau's "I Speak Cards" at a sign-in table for those who speak a language other than English. While staff may not be able to provide translation assistance at this meeting, the cards can be an excellent tool to identify language needs for future meetings.

For a public meeting or open house the notice shall include the language **"Si usted necesita la ayuda de un traductor del idioma español, por favor comuníquese con la SGRC al teléfono 229-333-5277, cuando menos 1 semana antes de la junta."** which reads: "If you need the help of a translator of Spanish language, please contact the SGRC at 229-333-5277, at least 1 week before the meeting."

Language Assistance Measures

In the event that the VLMPO should receive a request for assistance in a foreign language, staff members will take the name and contact information of the person. Staff will determine the language spoken and seek out a local translator/interpreter. If the required language translator/interpreter is not available locally, staff shall use other professional services like the Language Line or the Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators.

MPO Staff Training

Incoming staff members will be briefed on the VLMPO's LEP Plan and how to assist LEP residents. They will be told to keep a record

of language assistance requests to assess future LEP population needs.

Providing Notice to LEP Persons

The VLMPO will provide notice in both English and Spanish for all public meetings in accordance with its Participation Plan.

Non-English Speaking Communities

Upon request, the MPO may make arrangements to have a translator available for communications in another language and to have written materials distributed at the meeting in the requested language.

Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan

MPOs are required to update key planning documents (see Factor 3), and monitoring the success of the LEP Plan will be an ongoing process. Together with the PP, the LEP plan will be reviewed annually for any necessary updates.

Dissemination of the LEP Plan

The MPO will post the LEP Plan and the PP on its website at: www.sgrc.us/transportation. Copies of the LEP Plan will be provided to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and any person or agency requesting a copy.

Title VI Compliance Plan

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d) provides that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race color or national origin , be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination under and program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The scope of Title VI was expanded by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 to include all of a recipient’s and contractor’s programs or activities, whether federally assisted or not.

The broader application of nondiscrimination law that is found in other statutes, regulations and Executive Orders include: Section 324 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based on sex. The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 that prohibits unfair and inequitable treatment of persons as a result of projects that are undertaken with Federal financial assistance. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the bases of disability as does the Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (ADA). The ADA also prohibits discrimination on the provisions of access to public buildings and requires that rest areas be accessible to person with disabilities. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits age discrimination. Other Title VI-related statutes include but are not limited to: 42 USC 2000d to 2000d-4; 42 USC 4601 to 4655; 23 USC 109(h); 23 USC 324; DOT Order 1050.2; EO 12250; EO 12898; 28 CFR 50.3.

This plan outlines the efforts of the VLMPO undertakes to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other subsequent statutes, regulations and Executive Orders.

Organization, Staffing and Structure

The Transportation and Environment Director is the designated Title VI Coordinator for

transportation programs at the SGRC. A full organization chart appears in the appendix.

Agency Administrator

The VLMPO Executive Director is authorized to ensure compliance with provisions of the VLMPO’s policy of non-discrimination and with the law, including the requirements of 23 CFR Part 200 and 49 CFR Part 21. The VLMPO’s grants compliance function and Title VI coordination shall be performed under the authority of the Executive Director.

Title VI Coordinator

The VLMPO has created a position of Title VI Coordinator to perform the duties of the Title VI Coordinator and ensure implementation of the VLMPO’s Title VI Federally Funded Transportation Program. The Title VI Coordinator has other duties and responsibilities in addition to Title VI. For all activities this position reports and has access directly to the VLMPO Executive Director. The Title VI Coordinator can be contacted at 229-333-5277 or by mail at 327 W Savannah Ave., Valdosta, GA 31601.

Title VI Plan Implementation

As authorized by the Executive Director, the Title VI Coordinator is responsible for initiating, monitoring, and ensuring compliance with Title VI requirements as follows:

- **Program Administration**
Administer the Title VI program and coordinate implementation of the plan. Ensure compliance with the assurances, policy, and program objectives. Perform Title VI program reviews to assess administrative procedures, staffing, and resources; provide recommendations as required to the VLMPO Executive Director.
- **Complaints**
Review written Title VI complaints that may be received by the VLMPO following the adopted procedural

guidelines (see Complaint Procedures). Ensure every effort is made to resolve complaints informally at the local or regional level.

- **Data Collection**

Review the statistical data gathering process performed by other staff periodically to ensure sufficiency of data for meeting the requirements of Title VI program administration.

- **Environmental Impact Statements**

Ensure that available census data are included as a part of all Environmental Impact Statements/Assessments (EIS/EIA) for projects receiving Federal Highway Administration or other Federal assistance.

- **Training Programs**

Conduct or facilitate training programs on Title VI issues and regulations for VLMPO employees and facilitate Title VI training for appropriate staff, contractors and sub recipients. A summary of training conducted will be reported in the annual update.

- **Title VI Plan Update**

Review and update the VLMPO Title VI Plan as needed or required. Present updated plan to the Executive Director for approval; submit amended Plan to GDOT.

- **Annual Accomplishment Report**

Prepare an annual report of Title VI accomplishments and changes to the program in the preceding fiscal year; identify goals and objectives for the upcoming year as required; and submit by July 31.

- **Public Outreach and Education**

Work with VLMPO staff to develop and disseminate Title VI program information to VLMPO employees and sub-recipients, including contractors, subcontractors, consultants, and sub-consultants and beneficiaries, as well as the general public. Public dissemination may include postings of official statements, inclusion of Title VI language in contracts or other agreements and website postings. Ensure public service announcements or notices are posted of proposed projects, hearings, meetings, or formation of public advisory boards, in newspapers or other media reaching the affected community. Ensure the full utilization of available minority publications or media; and, where appropriate, provide written or verbal information in languages other than English.

- **Elimination of Discrimination**

Work with GDOT, FHWA, and FTA to establish procedures for promptly resolving deficiencies, as needed. Recommend procedures to identify and eliminate discrimination that may be discovered in any VLMPO processes.

- **Maintain Legislative and Procedural Information**

Ensure the current VLMPO Title VI Plan, Annual Accomplishment Reports, and other resource information pertaining to the implementation and administration of the VLMPO's Title VI program will be maintained and updated by the Coordinator. Information will be made available to the public as requested or required.

Public Participation Policy

It is the policy of the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization to provide access to the planning process so as to allow the public opportunity to comment on transportation planning activities. By doing so, the VLMPO Policy Committee will have available to them public ideas, concerns, and suggestions on transportation planning issues.

The following policies are based on past experience and federal requirements. The means of access will be provided by SGRC in order for the public to be aware of and comment on transportation planning and programming for the region. These policies will be reviewed annually by the VLMPO to address changes in law, technology or strategy delivery.

Policy for Meeting Notification:

- For regular meetings of standing committees (Policy, Technical, and Citizen's) a meeting agenda and/or notice will be posted on the VLMPO website and sent to committee members and local media outlets at least two weeks prior to the regularly scheduled meeting. A notice will also be posted at least two weeks prior to the regularly scheduled meeting in a conspicuous place at the regular meeting location.
- For special called meetings of standing committees the agenda will be posted to the VLMPO website and sent to local media outlets at least 24-hours prior to the meeting. A notice will also be posted at least 24-hours prior to a special called meeting in a conspicuous place at the regular meeting location.
- Committee agendas will be sent to all local media outlets and persons who have been added to the 'Committee

Agenda Mailing List' at the same time agendas are sent to other groups as noted above.

- Should a regular or special called meeting not take place at the regular meeting place a notice will be posted at least 24-hours prior in a conspicuous place at the regular meeting location.
- The agendas for all MPO standing committee meetings will include an opportunity for public comment.
- For a public meeting or open house the a notice will be posted on the VLMPO website and sent to committee members, the VLMPO mailing list, media outlets and other interested parties at least two weeks prior to the event.
- The notice for a public meeting or open house will include a statement that accessibility aids will be made available at the public event if a written request is made at least one week prior to the event.
- For a public meeting or open house the notice shall include the language "**Si usted necesita la ayuda de un traductor del idioma español, por favor comuníquese con la SGRC al teléfono 229-333-5277, cuando menos 1 semana antes de la junta.**" which reads: "If you need the help of a translator of Spanish language, please contact the SGRC at 229-333-5277, at least 1 week before the meeting."
- If a written request is received at least one week prior to an event, the VLMPO will make available a translator for communications in a language other than English and will provide requested written materials as well.
- The generally accepted means of contacting the VLMPO will be provided in all meeting notices.

Policy for Meeting Accessibility:

- All meetings hosted by the VLMPO are open to the public and will be held at a

location that is accessible for persons with disabilities.

- All meetings will be held at times that offer convenience to the broadest population possible.
- The VLMPO will make arrangements to have a translator available for the visually or hearing impaired or for persons with limited English proficiency when a written request is received at least one week prior to the meeting or event.

Policy for Public Review of Plans:

- The VLMPO will make copies (both electronically and paper) of the draft metropolitan transportation plan, draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and other necessary draft documents available for public review for a period of at least 30 days.
- The VLMPO will make copies of the draft metropolitan transportation plan, draft TIP, and other necessary draft documents available for public review at the office of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (located at 327 W. Savannah Ave., Valdosta, GA), at all public libraries in counties within the VLMPO Metropolitan Planning Area, and on the VLMPO website.
- A legal notice will be placed in the area's newspaper of largest circulation on or before the first day of publication of the document for public comment. The legal notice will provide basic information on the document, public review period, and the means of submitting comments, and the open house or other public involvement opportunity. This information will be posted on the VLMPO web site and sent to the VLMPO mailing list and media contacts.
- Members of the VLMPO standing committees (Policy, Technical, and Citizen's) will be given an advanced review period (at least 30 days) of

planning documents (TIP, LRTP, UPWP, PP, etc.) prior to being distributed for public comment.

- All comments received during a public comment period will become a record of that plan or document. These comments and any necessary responses will be shared with the VLMPO Policy Committee and other appropriate agencies.
- The VLMPO will consult with resource agencies and other interested parties during any public review period. The VLMPO will notify the agencies identified in the Appendix via letter of the review period and solicit comments from them.

Policy for MTP Amendments:

- Amendments to the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP, or long range transportation plan) will follow the procedures outlined in the Appendix of this PP.
- The VLMPO will make copies (both electronically and paper) of the new or amended draft metropolitan transportation plan available for public review for a period of at least 30 days.
- During the public review period the VLMPO will host at least one open house or public meeting.

Policy for TIP Amendments:

- The public involvement process for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is used to satisfy the Georgia Department of Transportation public participation process for the Program of Projects (POP).
- The VLMPO will make copies (both electronically and paper) of the draft TIP available for a public review period of at least 30 days.
- Amendments to the TIP shall follow the amendment process outlined in the most current TIP (see appendix K).

- During the public review period the VLMPO will host at least one open house or public meeting.

Policy for Significant Comments

- The VLMPO will make the LRTP, TIP, PP and other documents where appropriate available for an additional public comment period of at least 30 days if the final document differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

Policy for UPWP Amendments:

- Any changes or amendments to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) will be taken before the VLMPO's committees for approval but there is no public review period.

Policy for PP Amendment Process:

- As prescribed in federal regulations the VLMPO will make copies (both electronically and paper) of the draft Participation Plan (PP) available for a public review period of at least 45 days.
- Any changes or amendments to the PP after adoption will require an additional 45 day public review period.
- The VLMPO will annually review and amend as necessary the PP including the LEP and Title VI sections.

Policy for Open Records Request:

- An individual seeking an open records request shall provide a request identifying in detail the records requested, a contact name, phone number and mailing address. The VLMPO will provide existing and available records within three business days upon receipt of the request. Should records not be available within three business days the VLMPO will

provide the requestor within three business days a timeline when those records will be available. The VLMPO may impose reasonable charges for the search, retrieval, redaction, and production or copying costs of records in accordance with Georgia law.

Strategies and Techniques

The VLMPO has identified several goals or strategies that the agency strives to meet through the techniques and policies set forth in this PP. These strategies were identified as 'goals' in the previous PP adopted by the VLMPO and are still relevant so they have not been changed. However, the techniques have been updated as needs and available technologies have changed over time. These strategies and techniques are the means by which the VLMPO will implement the public participation policies identified later in this plan. Included in the Appendix are two matrices that express the frequency with which these strategies and techniques are mentioned in a literature review. Here can be glimpsed many of the previous techniques that have been utilized by the VLMPO as well as a few others that will help further outreach activities in ways that are deemed useful for the local area.

Strategy 1:

Raise public awareness and understanding of the transportation planning process including the functions, responsibilities and programs of the MPO and identify how interested citizens can become involved.

Speaking Engagements:

Members of MPO professional staff will be available to be speakers/presenters to civic clubs, schools, churches, fraternal organizations, neighborhood groups, and any special interest groups who are interested in transportation concerns and issues.

Some specific outreach techniques of this sort may include communications with the various organizations and contacts at VSU which will provide a central hub through which to facilitate contact with key groups and individuals that may help generate awareness about how to participate in the transportation planning process among key demographics. Another example of this will be the "piggy-backing" on other popular events such as local high school and college football games or local

fairs and festivals with a kiosk set up advertising the "how and why" individuals can and should get involved with the public participation process through a fully informed outreach staff, banners, pamphlets, flyers, etc.

Newsletters:

The VLMPO publishes a quarterly newsletter that is distributed to local and state government officials, leaders of development and social service agencies, churches, leaders of citizen groups, the media and other interested parties throughout the region and the state.

Media Relations:

The VLMPO will notify media outlets including television, radio, newspapers, and magazines who serve the VLMPO Metropolitan Planning Area of all regular and special public meetings held for the purpose of informing citizens and gathering input on MPO plans and projects. Among this outreach will be a specific focus on media that is especially relevant to target populations wherever possible.

Partner Agency Publications:

The VLMPO will make available and distribute as needed and where appropriate publications and documents, like the FHWA brochure "A Citizen's Quick Reference Guide to Transportation Decision-making," from other partner agencies that help interested parties better understand the transportation planning process.

Websites and Social Media:

The SGRC will provide a website for the VLMPO (currently: www.sgrc.us) that provides access to transportation plans, studies and other documents. To help generate maximum participation through new technologies the VLMPO will be exploring the use of texting and an app for access, real time polling, voting, and live streaming purposes. The VLMPO will also continue to explore new social media websites and technologies to utilize for raising public awareness and gathering input.

Strategy 2:

Provide the public and others with early, ongoing and meaningful opportunities for involvement in the transportation planning process.

Open Houses:

The VLMPO will use public open houses to allow the general public and interested parties opportunities to review the metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, PP and other documents before their adoption. This allows the public to interact one-on-one with the MPO professional staff and provide meaningful input in the transportation planning process. In addition to open houses another useful technique which will be explored is pop-up meetings/events which are done in popular areas without prior advertisements and give an added benefit of representing the public in a more natural way because interested parties and activists are far less likely to derail the thoughts of your average citizen.

Public Meetings and Hearings:

More formal public meetings will be used by the VLMPO in the development of transportation plans and documents where it is necessary for the MPO staff to verbally and/or visually present information to the public and formally respond to comments from an audience.

Focus/Advisory Groups:

Focus groups may include advisory groups that will be formed as needed by the VLMPO Policy Committee to assist in the approach and direction of the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and other major plans or projects.

Public Comment Forms:

Forms will be provided at all public meetings to allow attendees to write comments and concerns related to the plans that are under review and/or the process that is being used. The VLMPO website will include appropriate methods for the public to contact and provide comments to the MPO staff.

Surveys:

Surveys may be prepared and distributed electronically (website and/or email) , at public meetings, open houses or through focus groups and partner agencies for the purpose of gathering further input into the transportation planning process.

Strategy 3:

Maintain timely contact with key stakeholders and the public throughout the transportation planning process.

Committees and Task Forces:

The VLMPO will seek out community stakeholders to serve on the advisory committees or task forces that give guidance to the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and other projects as needed.

Citizen's Advisory Committee:

The VLMPO Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has been established to review all major MPO plans and reports prior to their adoption and help MPO staff in identifying public outreach opportunities. The CAC membership represents a vast cross section of the community appointed by each local government jurisdiction as well as several community organizations and agencies. The CAC meets quarterly and all meetings are open to the public.

Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) membership includes staff from various federal, state, and local agencies and other associations who have a technical knowledge of transportation or planning. The TAC functions to ensure the involvement of all operation departments, advisory agencies, and multi-modal transportation providers involved with the planning process and subsequent implementation of plans. The TAC evaluates transportation plans and projects based on whether or not they are technically warranted and financially feasible.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee is a forum for cooperative decision making by principal elected and appointed officials of the general purpose local governments and inter-modal transportation providers. The Policy Committee is also responsible for taking into consideration the recommendations from the Citizen's Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee when adopting plans or setting policy. The Policy Committee has final authority in the matters of policy and adoption of plans.

The Policy Committee, with input from the Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, annually revises and adopts the Transportation Improvement Program and other documents, resolutions, amendments, etc. in order to comply with the federal regulations.

Stakeholder Interviews:

This technique will be used with the community stakeholders who have been identified to have a direct interest in specific planning activities of the MPO by encouraging them to express specific concerns or ideas for issues raised in any particular project or plan undertaken by the VLMPO.

Resource and Partner Agencies:

The VLMPO maintains a mailing list of Resource and Partner Agencies and other interested parties. The VLMPO will notify these organizations through mailed letters for public comment periods on the MPO LRTP, TIP, and PP (as well as other plans/reports as appropriate). The mailing list will be updated from time to time with new contact information and any new partners that are identified.

Strategy 4:

Identify, involve and mitigate impacts on traditionally underserved communities (those communities with high concentrations of minority, low-income, elderly or disabled populations) in the transportation planning process.

EJ Outreach:

The VLMPO will engage in outreach to minority business alliances, faith based organizations, community/neighborhood organizations, and low-income/elderly or disabled advocacy groups using other strategies and techniques described in this PP.

Limited English Proficiency

When the VLMPO sponsors a public function, a staff member or designee will greet and briefly speak to each attendee, informally gauging the attendee's ability to speak and understand English, he or she will ask a question that requires a full sentence reply.

The VLMPO may use the Census Bureau's "I Speak Cards" at a sign-in table for those who speak a language other than English. While staff may not be able to provide translation assistance at this meeting, the cards can be an excellent tool to identify language needs for future meetings.

For a public meeting or open house the notice shall include the language **"Si usted necesita la ayuda de un traductor del idioma español, por favor comuníquese con la SGRC al teléfono 229-333-5277, cuando menos 1 semana antes de la junta."** which reads: "If you need the help of a translator of Spanish language, please contact the SGRC at 229-333-5277, at least 1 week before the meeting."

Accessible Public Meetings:

All public meetings hosted by the VLMPO will be held at places that are accessible to persons with disabilities and are readily accessible to those that may not have transportation options. Meetings may be held in neighborhoods associated with a project or plan to allow for maximum outreach to Environmental Justice communities.

All meetings will be accessible to the broadest populations possible by offering convenient times for meeting participation.

Strategy 5:

Employ visualization and outreach techniques to better describe and communicate metropolitan transportation plans and processes to the public.

Published Documents:

The VLMPO will publish documents, reports, data, and other outputs in varying formats and methods that best tell the story of the information being communicated. These techniques may include written reports, videos, charts, pictures, scenario planning, etc. The VLMPO will maintain technologies appropriate with these methods.

Outreach Techniques:

The VLMPO will present information in mixed methods (ex: charts vs. written) as appropriate to better communicate transportation policies, programs and projects with the public and interested parties.

Strategy 6:

Implement goals of the Greater Lowndes County Common Community Vision that promote open, transparent and engaging public participation.

Regional Collaboration:

Actively lead and pursue regional, cross-jurisdictional collaboration efforts that are coordinated by regular meetings of regional government and business stakeholders.

Regional Partnerships:

Develop partnerships that promote open and meaningful government engagement by interested parties and stakeholders.

Regional Marketing:

Develop outreach materials, visualization techniques and information about regional transportation resources that assists and promotes local economic development efforts.

- Accessibility of technical information

Performance Measures

The VLMPO strives to meet all of the goals and strategies of the PP, through the performance measures outlined below the level of public interaction will attempt to be gauged. As a part of the VLMPO annual report many of these performance measures will be reviewed and will be used as a basis for updating the PP in the future.

Strategy 1:

Raise public awareness and understanding of the transportation planning process including the functions, responsibilities and programs of the MPO and identify how interested citizens can become involved.

- Number of public meetings
- Number of newsletters/publications
- Number of staff speaking engagements
- Attendance at public meetings
- Number of media engagements

Strategy 2:

Provide the public and others with early, ongoing and meaningful opportunities for involvement in the transportation planning process.

- Frequency of contact with the public
- Timely updates to websites
- Response to public comments
- Accessibility of staff to the public

Strategy 3:

Maintain timely contact with key stakeholders and the public throughout the transportation planning process.

- Number of stakeholder meetings
- Number of public meetings/events
- Number of Committee meetings
- Number of notices sent to resource and partner agencies
- How stakeholder issues were addressed in planning documents

Strategy 4:

Identify, involve and mitigate impacts on traditionally underserved communities (those communities with high concentrations of minority, low-income, elderly or disabled populations) in the transportation planning process.

- Number of public meetings
- Number of hours for public meetings
- Accessible location of public meetings
- Frequency of outreach to traditionally underserved populations
- Number of new relationships with human service agencies
- Qualitative exit survey at public meetings asking questions related to whether they felt their public involvement was successful and why they feel that way as well as identify who participated in the meeting including demographic characteristics

Strategy 5:

Employ visualization and outreach techniques to better describe and communicate metropolitan transportation plans and processes to the public.

- Number of published documents
- Number of different outreach techniques

Strategy 6:

Implement goals of the Greater Lowndes County Common Community Vision that promote open, transparent and engaging public participation.

- Participation in regional, cross-jurisdictional meetings
- Number of active transportation-related partnerships with the VLMPO and local governments

- Number of documents/reports promoting transportation and economic development

Annually this PP will be reviewed to ensure that it provides the best guidance for appropriate public participation for the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization. The VLMPO annual report will summarize these performance measures and give a report on increased, decreased or sustaining efforts related to each.

Appendix A: Title VI Policy Statement and Authorities

Title VI Policy Statement and Authorities

The VLMPO assures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, disability/handicap or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. The VLMPO further assures every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities, whether those program and activities are federally funded or not. In the event the VLMPO distributes Federal aid funds to another entity, the VLMPO will include the Title VI lane in all written agreements and will monitor for compliance. The VLMPO Title Vi Coordinated is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title CVI activities, preparing report and other responsibilities s as required by 23 CFR 200 and 49 CR 21.



Lisa Cribb, VLMPO/SGRC Executive Director

09/07/16

Date

Authorities

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d) provides that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race color or national origin , be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination under and program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The scope of Title VI was expanded by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 to include all of a recipient’s and contractor’s programs or activities, whether federally assisted or not.

Other Title VI-related statutes include, but are not limited to: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 42 USC 2000d to 2000d-4; 42 USC 4601 to 4655; 23 USC 109(h); 23 USC 324; DOT Order 1050.2; EO 12250; EO 12898; 28 CFR 50.3.

Appendix B: VLMPO Title VI Assurance

VLMPO Title VI Assurance

The Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (herein after referred to as VLMPO), HEREBY AGREES THAT as a condition to receiving any Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation, it will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat. 252, 42 USC 2000d--42 USC 2000d--4 (hereinafter referred to as the Act), and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary part 21, Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations), and other pertinent directives, to the end that in accordance with the Act, Regulations, and other pertinent directives, no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the VLMPO receives Federal financial assistance through the Department of Transportation, including the U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, and HEREBY GIVES ASSURANCE THAT it will promptly take any measures necessary to effectuate this agreement. This Assurance is required by Subsection 21.7(a) (1) of the Regulations.

More specifically and without limiting the above general assurance, the VLMPO hereby gives the following specific assurances to its Federal Aid Highway Program:

1. That the VLMPO agrees that each “program” and each “facility” as defined in Subsections 21.23(e) and 21.23(b) of the Regulations, will be (with regard to a “program”) conducted, or will be (with regard to a “facility”) operated in compliance with all requirements imposed by, or pursuant to, the Regulations.
2. That the VLMPO shall insert the following notification in all solicitations for bids for work or material subject to the Regulations made in connection with the Federal Aid Highway Program, and in adapted form in all proposals for negotiated agreements: VLMPO in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 78 Stat. 252, 42 USC 2000d---42 and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, part 21, Nondiscrimination in Federally assisted programs of the Department of Transportation issued pursuant to such Act, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin in consideration for an award.
3. That the VLMPO shall insert the clauses of Appendix 1 of this Assurance in every contract subject to the Act and the Regulations.
4. That the VLMPO shall insert the clauses of Appendix 2 of this Assurance, as a covenant running with the land, in any deed from the United States effecting a transfer of real property, structures, or improvements thereon, or interest therein.
5. That where the VLMPO receives Federal financial assistance to construct a facility, or part of a facility, the Assurance shall extend to the entire facility and facilities operated in connection therewith.
6. That where the VLMPO receives Federal financial assistance in the form, or for the acquisition of real property, or an interest in real property, the Assurance shall extend rights to space on, over or under such property.

7. That the VLMPO shall include the appropriate clauses set forth in Appendix 3 of this Assurance, as a covenant running with the land, in any future deeds, leases, permits, licenses, and similar agreements entered into by the VLMPO with other parties:
 - a. for the subsequent transfer of real property acquired or improved under the Federal Aid Highway Program; and
 - b. for the construction or use of or access to space on, over or under real property acquired, or improved under the Federal Aid Highway Program.
8. That this Assurance obligates the VLMPO for the period during which Federal financial assistance is extended to the program, or is in the form of, personal property, or real property or interest therein or structures or improvements there on, in which case the Assurance obligates the VLMPO or any transferee for the longer of the following periods:
 - a. The period during which the property is used for a purpose for which the Federal financial assistance is extended, or for another purpose involving the provision of similar service or benefits; or
 - b. The period during which the VLMPO retains ownership or possession of the property.
9. The VMPO shall provide for such methods of administration for the program as are found by the Secretary of Transportation, or the official to whom s/he delegates specific authority to five reasonable guarantee that it, other recipients, sub-recipients, contractors, subcontractors, transferees, successors in interest, and other participants of Federal financial assistance under such program will comply with all requirements imposed or pursuant to the Act, the Regulations, and this Assurance.
10. The VLMPO agrees that the United States has a right to seek judicial endorsement with regard to any matter arising under the Act, the Regulations, and this Assurance.

THIS ASSURANCE is given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal grants, loans, contracts, property, discounts or other Federal financial assistance extended after the date hereof to the VLMPO by the U.S. Department of transportation under the Federal Aid Highway Program and is binding on it, other recipients, sub-recipients, contractors, subcontractors, transferees, successors in interest and other participants in the Federal Aid Highway Program. The person whose signature appears below is authorized to sign this Assurance on behalf of the VLMPO.



Lisa Cribb, VLMPO Executive Director

09/07/16

Date

Appendix C: Title VI Contract Language

The text below, in its entirety, is in all contracts entered into by VLMPO. All of the text except the final section, entitled "Incorporation of Provisions," should be included in any contract entered into by any VLMPO contractor.

During the performance of this contract, the contractor, for itself, its assignees, and successors in interest (hereinafter referred to as the "Contractor"), agrees as follow

1. Compliance with Regulations

The Contractor shall comply with the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs of the Department of Transportation (hereinafter referred to as DOT), Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, part 21, as they may be amended from time to time, (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations), which are herein incorporated by reference and made a part of this contract.

2. Nondiscrimination

The Contractor, with regard to the work performed by it during the contract, shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin, age or disability in the selection and retention of subcontractors, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment. The Contractor shall not participate either directly or indirectly in discrimination.

3. Solicitations for Subcontracts, Including Procurement of Materials and Equipment

In all solicitations either by competitive bidding or negotiations made by the Contractor for work to be performed under a subcontract, including procurement of materials or leases of equipment, each potential subcontractor or supplier shall be notified by the Contractor of the Contractor's obligations under this contract and the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination on the ground of race, color, sex, or national origin.

4. Information & Reports

The Contractor shall provide all information and reports required by the Regulations or directives issued pursuant thereto, and shall permit access to its books, records, accounts, other sources of information, and its facilities as may be determined by the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization or the Federal Highway Administration to be pertinent to ascertain compliance with such Regulations, orders and instructions. Where any information required of a contractor is in the exclusive possession of another who fails or refuses to furnish this information, the Contractor shall so certify to the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization, or the Federal Highway Administration as appropriate, and shall set forth what efforts it has made to obtain the information.

5. Sanctions for Noncompliance

In the event of the Contractor's noncompliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of the contract, VLMPO, with state and federal agency concurrence, would initiate sanctions per 49 CFR 21.

6. Incorporation of Provisions

The Contractor shall include the provisions of paragraphs (1) through (5) in every subcontract, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment, unless exempt by the Regulations, or directives issued pursuant thereto. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any subcontractor or procurement as the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization or the Federal Highway Administration may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance. Provided, however, that in the event a Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or supplier as a result of such direction, the Contractor may request the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization enter into such litigation to protect the interests of the state and, in addition, the Contractor may request the United States to enter into such litigation to protect the interests of the U.S.

Title 23 CFR 200

Title 23 CFR 200 provides guidelines for: (a) Implementing the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Title VI compliance program under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related civil rights laws and regulations, and (b) Conducting Title VI program compliance reviews relative to the Federal-aid highway program.

Title 23 CFR 1235

The purpose of this part is to provide guidelines to States for the establishment of a uniform system for handicapped parking for persons with disabilities to enhance access and the safety of persons with disabilities that limit or impair the ability to walk.

Title 28 CFR 35

The purpose of this part is to effectuate subtitle A of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12131), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities.

Title 28 CFR 36

The purpose of this part is to implement title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12181), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public accommodations and requires places of public accommodation and commercial facilities to be designed, constructed, and altered in compliance with the accessibility standards established by this part.

Title 28 CFR 41

The purpose of this part is to implement Executive Order 12250, non-discrimination on the basis of handicap in federally assisted programs, which requires the Department of Justice to coordinate the implementation of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This part applies to each Federal department and agency that is empowered to extend Federal financial assistance.

Title 28 CFR 42, Subpart C

The purpose of this part is to effectuate the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to the end that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. This subpart refers to nondiscrimination, equal employment opportunity, policies and procedures. This subpart applies to any program for which Federal financial assistance is authorized under a law administered by the Department. It applies to money paid, property transferred, or other Federal financial assistance extended after the date of this subpart pursuant to an application whether approved before or after such date.

Title 28 CFR 50.3

Title 28 CFR 50.3 sets forth guidelines for the enforcement of Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964. (a) Where the heads of agencies having responsibilities under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 conclude there is noncompliance with regulations issued under that title, several alternative courses of action are open. In each case, the objective should be to secure prompt and full compliance so that needed Federal assistance may commence or continue. (b) Primary responsibility for prompt and vigorous enforcement of Title VI rests with the head of each department and agency administering programs of Federal financial assistance. Title VI itself and relevant Presidential directives preserve in each agency the authority and the duty to select, from among the available sanctions, the methods best designed to secure compliance in individual cases. The decision to terminate or refuse assistance is to be made by

the agency head or his designated representative. (c) This statement is intended to provide procedural guidance to the responsible department and agency officials in exercising their statutory discretion and in selecting, for each noncompliance situation, a course of action that fully conforms to the letter and spirit of section 602 of the Act and to the implementing regulations promulgated there under.

23 USC 324

The purpose of this part relates to prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex.

42 USC 4601-4655

These sections refer to uniform relocation assistance and real property acquisition policies for federal and federally assisted programs.

DOT Order 1050.2

This nondiscrimination directive refers to standard Title VI assurances.

Executive Order 12250

Executive Order 12250, issued in 1979, provided for the consistent and effective implementation of various laws prohibiting discriminatory practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or religion in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The responsibility for implementing this Executive Order was placed with the Attorney General. This responsibility, except for the authority to approve regulations, was redelegated to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. The Coordination and Review Section carries out this responsibility on a day to day basis.

Executive Order 12898

Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994, amplifies Title VI provisions. It states that each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice (EJ) 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 populations and low-income populations.

Executive Order 13166

Executive Order 13166, Improving Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, was issued in 2000 to improve access to federally conducted and federally assisted programs and activities for persons who, as a result of national origin, are limited in their English proficiency (LEP). It requires Federal agencies to ensure that recipients of Federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries.

Appendix D: VLMPO Title VI Notice to the Public

VLMPO Title VI Notice to the Public

The VLMPO hereby gives public notice that it is the VLMPO's policy to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any Federal Aid Highway program or other activity for which VLMPO receives Federal financial assistance.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with VLMPO. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the VLMPO Title VI Coordinator within 180 days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. Title VI Discrimination Complaint (sample in appendix) Forms may be obtained from the Southern Georgia Regional Commission office.

This statement is added to any meeting announcement to which the public and/or outside agencies or organizations may attend (such as public meetings and open houses both on-site and off-site, seminars, as well as VLMPO committee meetings).

"VLMPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. VLMPO public meetings are always held in ADA-accessible facilities and in transit-accessible locations when possible. Auxiliary services can be provided to individuals who submit a request at least seven days prior to a meeting."

The statement below should be added to all VLMPO public documents and publications. For publications, the statement can be added at the bottom of the title page.

"VLMPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. VLMPO's website (www.sgrc.us) may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages or formats, if requested."

Appendix E: VLMPO Title VI Complaint Procedures

Title VI Complaint Procedures

Any person who believes that he or she, individually, as a member of any specific class, or in connection with any disadvantaged business enterprise, has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, as amended, may file a complaint with the VLMPO. A complaint may also be filed by a representative on behalf of such a person. All complaints will be referred to the VLMPO's Title VI Coordinator for review and action.

The official form for any such complaints is included in the Appendix section of this paper as well as available on the website at www.sgrc.us.

In order to have the complaint considered under this procedure, the complainant must file the complaint no later than 180 days after:

- a) The date of alleged act of discrimination; or
- b) Where there has been a continuing course of conduct, the date on which that conduct was discontinued.

In either case, the VLMPO Executive Director or their designee may extend the time for filing or waive the time limit in the interest of justice, specifying in writing the reason for so doing.

Complaints shall be in writing, using the Title VI Complaint Form found in this document, and shall be signed by the complainant and/or the complainant's representative. Complaints shall set forth as fully as possible the facts and circumstances surrounding the claimed discrimination. In the event that a person makes a verbal complaint of discrimination to an officer or employee of the VLMPO, the person shall be interviewed by the Title VI Coordinator. If necessary, the Title VI

Coordinator will assist the person in reducing the complaint to writing and submit the written version of the complaint to the person for signature. The complaint shall then be handled according to the VLMPO's investigative procedures. Should the Title VI Coordinator be the individual charged the Executive Director or their designee will process the complaint to remove the Title VI Coordinator from any perceived conflict of interest.

Within 10 days, the Title VI Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the allegation, inform the complainant of procedures to be followed, and advise the complainant of other avenues of redress available, such as GDOT and USDOT.

The VLMPO will advise GDOT within 10 days of receipt of the allegations. Generally, the following information will be included in every notification to GDOT:

- a) Name, address, and phone number of the complainant.
- b) Name(s) and address(es) of alleged discriminating official(s).
- c) Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin or sex)
- d) Date of alleged discriminatory act(s).
- e) Date of complaint received by the VLMPO.
- f) A statement of the complaint.
- g) Other agencies (state, local or Federal) where the complaint has been filed.
- h) An explanation of the actions the VLMPO has taken or proposed to resolve the issue raised in the complaint.

GDOT will forward the complaint to FHWA. FHWA Office of Civil Rights will determine the appropriate individual and/or organization to conduct the investigation.

Within 60 days of receiving the complaint, the Title VI Coordinator will conduct an investigation of the allegation and based on the

information obtained, will render a recommendation for action in a report of findings to the Executive Director of the VLMPO. The complaint should be resolved by informal means whenever possible. Such informal attempts and their results will be summarized in the report of findings.

Within 90 days of receipt of the complaint, the Executive Director of the VLMPO will notify the complainant in writing of the final decision reached, including the proposed disposition of the matter. The notification will advise the complainant of his/her appeal rights with GDOT, or USDOT, if they are dissatisfied with the final decision rendered by the VLMPO. The Title VI Coordinator will also provide GDOT with a copy of this decision and summary of findings upon completion of the investigation.

Contract Review Procedures

The Title VI Coordinator will assist GDOT to periodically conduct Title VI compliance reviews. VLMPO staff will review select recipients of Federal-aid highway or other Federal funds, to ensure adherence to Title VI requirements. The VLMPO will work cooperatively to periodically confirm operational guidelines provided to consultants, contractors, and sub-recipients, including Title VI language, provisions, and related requirements, as applicable.

Post-Grant Reviews

The Title VI Coordinator will collaborate with VLMPO staff to conduct periodic post grant reviews of select recipients of Federal highway funds or other Federal funds, for roads, sidewalks, bridges, municipal construction, etc. to ensure adherence to Title VI requirements. Appropriate staff will periodically confirm that operational guidelines provided to consultants, contractors and sub-recipients include Title VI language and provisions and related requirements, where applicable.

Remedial Action

When irregularities occur in the administration of Federal-aid highway programs at either the VLMPO or sub-recipient levels, corrective action will be taken to resolve identified Title VI issues. VLMPO will seek the cooperation of the consultant, contractor or other sub-recipient in correcting deficiencies found during periodic reviews. VLMPO will provide technical assistance and guidance, upon request, to support voluntarily compliance by the sub-recipient.

When conducting Title VI compliance reviews, the VLMPO will reduce to writing any recommended remedial action agreed upon by the VLMPO and sub-recipient, and provide a copy of the letter within a period not to exceed 45 days. Sub-recipients placed in a deficiency status will be given a reasonable time, not to exceed 90 days after receipt of the deficiency letter, to voluntarily correct deficiencies. When a sub-recipient fails or refuses to voluntarily comply with requirements within the allotted time frame, VLMPO will submit to GDOT and FHWA copies of the case file and a recommendation that the sub-recipient be found in noncompliance. A follow-up review will be conducted within 180 days of the initial review to ascertain if the sub-recipient has complied with the Title VI Program requirements in correcting deficiencies previously identified. If the sub-recipient refuses to comply, VLMPO and GDOT may, with FHWA's concurrence, initiate sanctions per 49 CFR 21.

Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization
Title VI Complaint Form (attach additional pages as necessary)
This form is available on our website at www.sgrc.us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Basis of Complaint (e.g., race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, retaliation):

Date(s) of Alleged Discrimination: _____

Please provide a detailed description of the circumstances of the incident(s), including any additional information supporting your complaint (please use additional pages as necessary):

Please provide name(s), title and address of the person who allegedly discriminated against the complainant:

If complaint has also been filed with a state or federal agency, please list:

Printed and Signed Name

Date

Appendix F: VLMPO Meeting and Event Notice Guidelines

VLMPO Meeting and Event Guidelines

Staff Review Sheet Outlining Requirements of the Participation Plan

Event	Timeline	Who/Where
Policy, Technical, & Citizen's Meeting Notification (Meeting Agenda and/or Notice)	2 Weeks Prior to Meeting	Committees, Social Media, Traditional Media, SGRC Office, Agenda Mailing List
Special Called Meeting (Agenda)	24 Hours Prior to Meeting	Committees, Social Media, Traditional Media, SGRC Office, Agenda Mailing List
Public Meeting or Open House (Notice)	2 Weeks Prior to Meeting	Committees, Social Media, Traditional Media, SGRC Office, Agenda Mailing List
Request for Accessibility Aids	Must Be Received At Least 1 Week Prior to Meeting or Event	
Public Review Period (TP, TIP and Other documents)	At Least 30 Days	Committees, Social Media, Traditional Media, VDT Legal Notice, SGRC Office, Agenda Mailing List, Local Gov't & Libraries
Public Review Period (PP)	At Least 45 Days (In Accordance with Federal Law) <i>*Any changes and/or amendments after adoption require an additional 45 day public review period.</i>	Committees, Social Media, Traditional Media, VDT Legal Notice, SGRC Office, Agenda Mailing List
Legal Notice to Newspapers	At Least 2 Weeks Prior to Requested Publishing Date, and at least 2 weeks prior to meeting/event	Public Review Periods Required (Public Meeting or Open House may substitute commercial advertising)

Appendix G: VLMPO Participation Plan Checklist

VLMPO Participation Plan Checklist

Staff Checklist Used to Plan Public Review Periods and Outreach Efforts

Project: _____

Policy Committee Adoption Date: _____

Partner Review Period: _____ to _____ Public Review Period: _____ to _____

Participation Plan Strategy/Tool	Method Used (Yes/No)	Deadline Date(s)
SGRC Transportation Website		
Project Specific Websites		
MPO Mailing List		
Resource Agency Mailing List		
Committee Agenda Mailing List		
MPO Committee Mailing List		
Targeted Direct Mailings		
Commercial Advertisement		
Legal Notice		
Social Media Posting		
Newsletter Articles		
Press Release		
Metro 17 Message Board		
Small/Focus Group Meetings		
Civic Group Presentations		
Public Meetings/Open Houses		
Comment Forms		
Survey		
Posters/Flyers		
Visualization Techniques		
Stakeholder Interviews		

Appendix H: Successful Public Participation Matrix

In these two matrices several prominent Participation Plans, scholarly articles, and national institutions' recommendations that have public participation at the heart of their organization if not wholly dedicated to public participation have been explored. From this research the most popular and widely discussed methods for successful public participation with special emphasis on transportation planning whenever this specific data was available was explored. Everything listed on these tables has wide potential of course but a few of the

significant suggestions were piggybacking on other events to help get the word out such as football games or churches, visualization of data whenever possible to help illustrate in non-technical language, advertising in media sources that may be more popular amongst target populations, and making use of mobile apps because of the burden it causes mobile users to navigate a web page combined with the proliferation of mobile internet usage among key demographics. The amount of discussion for many of these categories speaks volumes alone but when combined with the characteristics of Lowndes County a full picture of potential future steps begins to become clear.

	Transportation Research Board: Update...	Crowsby, Ned, Janet Kelly, and Paul Schaefer	Kathlene, Lynn and John A. Martin	Chess, Caron and Kristen Purcell	Berry, Jeffrey, Kent Portney, Mary Bablich, and Richard Mahoney	Transportation Research board: Effective...	U.S. Dept. of Trans. FHWA MPO EJ Report MORPC	MACORTS – Athens, GA MPO	Macon – Bibb Planning & Zoning Commission	U.S. Dept. of Trans. FHWA: EJ Trends Report	U.S. Dept. of Trans. FHWA: Public Involvement
Piggybacking on other events	X					X			X	X	X
Football games						X			X		X
Churches						X			X		X
Fairs											X
Internet	X					X				X	X
Email									X		X
Intranet						X		X	X	X	X
Mobile apps	X										X
Video streaming						X					X
Voting	X										X
Active social media	X									X	X
Visualizations of data	X		X			X	X	X	X		X
Advertise in media outlets more appropriate to target populations	X							X	X	X	X
Citizen panels		X	X								X
Pub. recommendations actually implemented	X	X	X								X
Involvement often and early				X	X						X
Non-trad. Location	X					X			X		X
Games or contests						X					X
Exit survey				X							
Schedule meetings around different work schedules			X								X

Flyers, pamphlets, etc.	X							X			X
Leveraging relationships						X					X
Mailings									X		X
Non-technical language	X	X				X					X
Transportation fair											X
Open house											X
Workshops											X
Follow up with participants											X
Share resources with other agencies											X
Offer low-cost meeting perks											X
Small group problem solving											X
Ads									X		X
Newspaper ads									X		X
Billboards											X
Utility bill stuffers											X
Television ads											X
Notable persons											X

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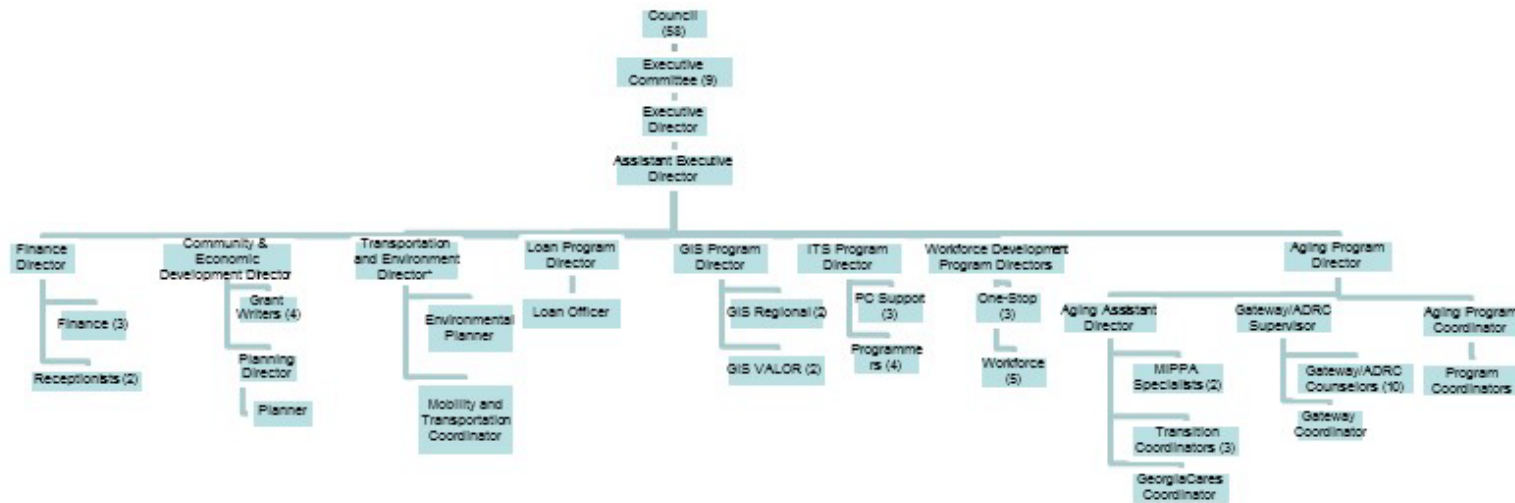
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Appendix I: SGRC Organizational Chart



*Transportation and Environment Director serves as MPO/Transportation DBE Liaison

Appendix J: VLMPO Resource Agency List

Salutation	First Name	Last Name	Company	Address	City	State/Province	ZIP/Postal Code
Mr.	Tony	Aldridge	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	516-A County Farm Road	Nashville	Georgia	31639
Ms.	Myrna	Ballard	Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce	416 N Ashley St.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Mr.	F. Allen	Barnes	Georgia Environmental Protection Division	2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive	Atlanta	Georgia	30334
Mr.	Bert	Brantley	Georgia State Road & Tollway Authority	47 Trinity Avenue, 4th Floor	Atlanta	Georgia	30334
Mr.	King	Bridges	Berrien County Parks and Recreation Authority	1015 Exum Rd.	Nashville	Georgia	31639
Ms.	Lynn	Carter	Seven Rivers RC & D	239 N East Park Ave Suite E	Baxley	Georgia	31513
Mr.	Harold	Chambers	Coastal Plains RESA	245 North Robinson St.	Lenox	Georgia	31637
Ms.	Gretchen	Corbin	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	60 Executive Park South, NE	Atlanta	Georgia	30329
Dr.	David	Crass	GA DNR Historic Preservation Division	254 Washington Street, SW Ground Level	Atlanta	Georgia	30334
Mr.	Luke	Crosson	Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission	4344 Albany Highway	Dawson	Georgia	39842
Mr.	Chris	Cummiskey	Georgia Department of Economic Development	75 Fifth Street, N.W., Suite 1200	Atlanta	Georgia	30308
Ms.	Anne-Marie	Day	FHWA GA Division	61 Forsyth St SW Suite 177100	Atlanta	Georgia	30303-3104
		Director	GA DNR Environmental Protection Division - Albany	2024 Newton Road	Albany	Georgia	31701
		Director	GA DNR Sustainability Division	7 M L K Jr Dr SW # 450	Atlanta	Georgia	30334
Mr.	Robert	Farris	Georgia Forestry Commission	5645 Riggins Mill Road P. O. Box 819	Macon	Georgia	31202-0819
		Director	Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area	1773-A Bowens Mill Hwy	Fitzgerald	Georgia	31750
		Director	Brooks County Museum	121 N. Culpepper St.	Quitman	Georgia	31643
Mr.	Brent	Dykes	Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission	4310 Lexington Road P.O. Box 8024	Athens	Georgia	30603
Mr.	Mark	Williams	Georgia Department of Natural Resources	2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE Suite 1252	Atlanta	Georgia	30334
		Executive Director	Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge	2700 Suwannee Canal Road	Folkston	Georgia	31537
Ms.	Heather	McTeer	US EPA Region 4	Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center 61 Forsyth Street, SW	Atlanta	Georgia	30303-8960
Mr.	Curtis	Foltz	Georgia Ports Authority	PO Box 2406	Savannah	Georgia	31402
Mr.	Dan	Forster	GA DNR Wildlife Resources Division	2070 U.S. Hwy. 278, SE	Social Circle	Georgia	30025
Mr.	Josh	Goodman	Georgia Forestry Commission	3011 US Highway 84 East	Valdosta	Georgia	31606-0303
Mr.	Thomas	Howell	Georgia Department of Transportation	600 W Peachtree St. NW 11th Floor	Atlanta	Georgia	30308
Mr.	Buck	Kline	Georgia Forestry Commission	3011 US Highway 84 East	Valdosta	Georgia	31606-0303
Mr.	Cliff	Lewis	GA DNR Environmental Protection Division	531 Main St Suite D	Tifton	Georgia	31794
		Manager	Georgia Forestry Commission Satilla District	5003 Jacksonville Hwy	Waycross	Georgia	31503
Mr.	George	Page	Valdosta-Lowndes Parks and Recreation Authority	1901 N. Forrest Street	Valdosta	Georgia	31603
Mr.	Alan	Ricketts	Valdosta Lowndes Development Authority	2110 N. Patterson St.	Valdosta	Georgia	31602
Ms.	Andrea	Schuijjer	Valdosta Lowndes Development Authority	PO Box 1963	Valdosta	Georgia	31603
Mr.	Bryan	Shaw	Berrien County Historical Foundation	P. O. Box 417	Nashville	Georgia	31639
Mr.	David	Sofferin	Behavioral Health Service of South Georgia	3120 North Street Ext., Suite C	Valdosta	Georgia	31602
Ms.	Corinne	Thornton	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	60 Executive Park South, NE	Atlanta	Georgia	30329-2231
Ms.	Leigh	Toucton	NAACP	P.O. box 1324	Valdosta	Georgia	31603
Ms.	Kim	Wagner	GA Department of Labor Blindness or Vision Impaired Division	820-C Love Ave.	Tifton	Georgia	317983
Mr.	Travis	Watson	Georgia Forestry Commission	13950 U.S. Hwy 129 N	Nashville	Georgia	31639-4961
Ms.	Kathy	Zahul	Georgia Department of Transportation	935 E Confederate Ave. Bldg 24	Atlanta	Georgia	30316
Ms.	Crissy	Staley	Berrien County Chamber of Commerce	PO Box 217	Nashville	Georgia	31639
		President	Quitman-Brooks County Chamber of Commerce	PO Box 151	Quitman	Georgia	31643
Mr.	Sandy	Sanders	Lakeland-Lanier County Chamber of Commerce	8 South Valdosta Road	Lakeland	Georgia	31635
		Manager	Georgia Forestry Commission Flint District	3561 Hwy 112	Camilla	Georgia	31730
Ms.	Becky	Kelley	GA DNR State Parks and Historic Sites	2600 Hwy 155, Suite C	Stockbridge	Georgia	31281
Mr.	Tommy	Turk	GA DNR State Parks and Historic Sites - Region 2	One Conservation Way	Brunswick	Georgia	31520-8605
Mr.	Robert	Emery	GA DNR State Parks and Historic Sites - Region 4	2024 Newton Road	Albany	Georgia	31701-3567
Mr.	Eric	Bentley	GA DNR State Parks and Historic Sites - Region 3	2024 Newton Road	Albany	Georgia	31701-3567
		Director	CSX Railroad	173 Boulevard SE	Atlanta	Georgia	30312-2319
Mr.	Rick	Harris	Norfolk Southern Railroad	1200 Peachtree St. NE	Atlanta	Georgia	30309
Ms.	Robin	Cumbus	Lowndes County Public Works Department	550 Gil Harbin Industrial Blvd.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Mr.	John	Whitehead	Valdosta Public Works Department	1017 Myrtle St	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
		Commissioner's Office	Berrien County	201 N Davis St. Rm 198	Nashville	Georgia	31639
		Commissioner's Office	Lanier County	100 Main St.	Lakeland	Georgia	31635
		Commissioner's Office	Brooks County	PO Box 272	Quitman	Georgia	31643
		Commissioner's Office	Lowndes County	327 N Ashley St.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
		Mayor's Office	City of Valdosta	216 E Central Ave.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
		Mayor's Office	City of Lake Park	120 Essa St.	Lake Park	Georgia	31636
		Mayor's Office	City of Hahira	102 S. Church St.	Hahira	Georgia	31632
		Mayor's Office	City of Remerton	1757 Poplar St.	Remerton	Georgia	31601
		Mayor's Office	City of Dasher	3686 US 41 South	Dasher	Georgia	31601
Mr.	Jim	Galloway	Valdosta Regional Airport	1750 Airport Rd	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Mr.	Mike	Martin	Valdosta Community Development Department	300 N Lee St.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Mr.	Matt	Martin	Valdosta Planning and Zoning Office	300 N Lee St.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Mr.	Jason	Davenport	Lowndes County Plannign and Zoning Office	327 N Ashley St.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
		Fire Chief	Lowndes County Code Enforcement	327 N Ashley St.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Ms.	Carol	Comer	GA DOT Intermodal Programs	600 W Peachtree St. NW	Atlanta	Georgia	30308
		Director	Easter Seals of South Georgia	610 North Patterson Street, Ste A	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Mr.	Leggett	Lovan	Southeastern Freight Lines	2126 WEST HILL AVENUE	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Mr.	Lee	Smith	Outsource Logistics	5849 Production Way	Valdosta	Georgia	30606
		Manager	Roadway	6470 Lake Park Bellville Rd	Lake Park	Georgia	31636
		Manager	Home Depot Distribution Center	6201 PETERSON RD	Lake Park	Georgia	31636
		Manager	Lowe's Distribution Center	1550 Commerce Dr	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
		Manager	Dillard's Distribution Center	800 Gil Harbin Industrial Blvd	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Ms.	Missy	Rowland	SGRC AAA Coordinated Transportation	1725 S. GA PKWY W.	Waycross	Georgia	31503
Mr.	Wendy	Guinn	GA DHS Coordinated Transportation	PO Box 1148	Nahunta	Georgia	31553
Mr.	Blake	Waagner	Valdosta Bike Center	1907 Baytree Pl	Remerton	Georgia	31601
Ms.	Kimberly	Tanner	Valdosta Mayor's Council for Person with Disabilities	216 E Central Ave.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Mr.	Danny	Saturday	MDS, Inc.	1610 River St	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
Dr.	William	Grow	South Health District	325 W Savannah Ave.	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
		Chairman	Lowndes County Board of Health	206 S Patterson St	Valdosta	Georgia	31601
		Chairman	Lanier County Board of Health	53 W Murrell St.	Lakeland	Georgia	31635
		Chairman	Brooks County Board of Health	500 E Courtland	Quitman	Georgia	31643
		Chairman	Berrien County Board of Health	600A Jefferson St.	Nashville	Georgia	31639
Mr.	Randy	Sauls	South Georgia Medical Center	2501 N Patterson St.	Valdosta	Georgia	31602

Appendix K: VLMPO TIP/LRTP Amendment Process

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued the Final Rule to revise the Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning regulations incorporating changes from the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) with an effective date of July 2012. The revised regulations clearly define administrative modifications and amendments as actions to update plans and programs. 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 450.104 defines administrative modifications and amendments as follows:

- Administrative modification “means a minor revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously-included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. Administrative Modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas).”
- Amendment “means a revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan or TIP that involves a major change to a project included in a metropolitan transportation plan or TIP, including the addition or deletion of a project or major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. An amendment is a revision that requires public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs involving “non-exempt” projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas). In the context of a long-range statewide transportation plan, an amendment is a revision approved by the State in accordance with its public involvement process.”

The following procedures have been developed for processing administrative modifications and amendments to the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) TIPs and Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs). Processes described below detail procedures that are to be used to update an existing approved STIP or TIP and associated plan, if applicable. A key element of the amendment process is to assure that funding balances are maintained.

Administrative Modifications for Initial Authorizations

The following actions are eligible as Administrative Modifications to the TIP/LRTP:

- A. Revise a project description without changing the project scope, conflicting with the environmental document or changing the conformity finding in nonattainment and maintenance areas (less than 10% change in project termini). This change would not alter the original project intent.
- B. Splitting or combining projects.
- C. Federal funding category change.
- D. Minor changes in expenditures for transit projects.
- E. Roadway project phases may have a cost increase less than \$2,000,000 or 20% of the amount to be authorized.
- F. Shifting projects within the 4-year STIP as long as the subsequent annual draft STIP was submitted prior to September 30.
- G. Projects may be funded from lump sum banks as long as they are consistent with category definitions.

An administrative modification can be processed in accordance with these procedures provided that:

- 1. It does not affect the air quality conformity determination.
- 2. It does not impact financial constraint.
- 3. It does not require public review and comment.

The administrative modification process consists of a monthly list of notifications from GDOT to all involved parties, with change summaries sent on a monthly basis to the FHWA and FTA by the GDOT. The GDOT will submit quarterly reports detailing projects drawn from each lump sum bank with remaining balance to the FHWA.

Amendments for Initial Authorizations

The following actions are eligible as Amendments to the TIP/LRTP:

- A. Addition or deletion of a project.
- B. Addition or deletion of a phase of a project.
- C. Roadway project phases that increase in cost over the thresholds described in the Administrative Modification section.
- D. Addition of an annual TIP.
- E. Major change to scope of work of an existing project. A major change would be any change that alters the original intent i.e. a change in the number of through lanes, a change in termini of more than 10 percent.
- F. Shifting projects within the 4-year STIP which require redemonstration of fiscal constraint or when the subsequent annual draft STIP was not submitted prior to September 30. (See Administrative Modification item F.)

Amendments to the TIP/LRTP will be developed in accordance with the provisions of 23 CFR Part 450. This requires public review and comment and responses to all comments, either individually or in summary form. For amendments in MPO areas, the public review process should be carried out in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Participation Plan. The GDOT will assure that the amendment process and the public involvement procedures have been followed. Cost changes made to the second, third and fourth years of the TIP will be balanced during the TIP yearly update process. All amendments should be approved by FHWA and/or FTA.

Notes:

- 1. The date a TIP becomes effective is when the Governor or his designee approves it. For nonattainment and maintenance areas, the effective date of the TIP is based on the date of U.S. Department of Transportation's positive finding of conformity.
- 2. The date the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) becomes effective is when FHWA and FTA approve it.
- 3. The STIP/TIP is developed on the state fiscal year which is July 1-June 30.
- 4. Funds for cost increases will come from those set aside in the STIP/TIP financial plan by the GDOT for modifications and cost increases. Fiscal Constraint will be maintained in the STIP/TIP at all times.

Appendix L: Participation Plan Public Comment

Public Notice of a Public Comment and Review Period and Public Open House

In accordance with requirements set forth in 23 CFR 450.316, and other federal and state laws and regulations; the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO) is proposing an update to its Participation Plan (PP) for the Valdosta Metropolitan Planning Area which includes all of Lowndes County and portions of Brooks, Berrien and Lanier Counties.

This PP update is available for public review and comment from July 1, 2016 to August 15, 2016 at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission, 327 W Savannah Ave.; all public libraries in Berrien, Lanier and Lowndes Counties; on the VLMPO website (www.sgrc.us/transportation); all county government administration offices in Brooks, Berrien, Lanier and Lowndes Counties; and all city government administration offices in Lowndes County.

On Tuesday, July 26, 2016 the VLMPO will host a Public Open House at the office of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (327 W Savannah Ave.) from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm to allow members of the public to ask questions and speak to VLMPO staff regarding this update to the PP. Accessibility aids (interpreter, large print, etc.) will be made available at the open house if a written request is made at least one week prior to the event. Si usted necesita la ayuda de un traductor del idioma español, por favor comuníquese con la SGRC al teléfono 229-333-5277, cuando menos 1 semana antes de la junta.

Comments are being accepted by email at chull@sgrc.us, by fax at 229-333-5312, or by mailing them to VLMPO, 327 W Savannah Ave., Valdosta, GA 31601.

For more information please call Corey Hull, MPO Coordinator at 229-333-5277.

This section will also include public comments and any responses