

**Public Participation Process
For
Transportation Planning Activities
In the Pee Dee Region
Of South Carolina
Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion and Marlboro Counties
(Excluding the Florence MPO Area)**

Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments

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INTRODUCTION

The Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments (PDRCOG) is one of ten regional planning organizations that cover rural portions of South Carolina and help manage transportation issues. The organization covers six counties, including:

- Chesterfield,
- Darlington,
- Dillon,
- Florence,
- Marion and
- Marlboro

The jurisdiction of the PDRCOG does not include the urban territory managed by the Florence Area Transportation Study (FLATS) area (portions of Florence and Darlington Counties).

The PDRCOG is responsible for directing federal transportation funds to local transportation activities within its six-county jurisdiction. It is considered a Rural Planning Organization (RPO), in contrast to FLATS, a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), adopted in 1998, and SAFETEA-LU, enacted on August 10, 2005, are the current laws mandating transportation planning. This Public Participation Process and is a requirement under Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations Part 450.

The PDRCOG transportation planning area dominates northeastern South Carolina, covering all of the above six counties except the Florence urban area (85,324 persons). This planning area is illustrated below and encompasses 31 municipalities:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| • Bennettsville | • Hartsville | • Marion | • Pamplico |
| • Blenheim | • Jefferson | • McBee | • Patrick |
| • Cheraw | • Johnsonville | • McColl | • Ruby |
| • Chesterfield | • Lake City | • Mt. Croghan | • Scranton |
| • Clio | • Lake View | • Mullins | • Sellers |
| • Coward | • Lamar | • Nichols | • Society Hill |
| • Darlington | • Latta | • Olanta | • Tatum |
| • Dillon | • Marion | • Pageland | • Timmons ville |

Federal lands in the planning area include the Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge and numerous isolated postal facilities.

This plan is patterned after the FLATS public participation process, primarily to ensure the public experiences a relatively consistent process throughout the entire Pee Dee area.

PURPOSE

The Pee Dee Region has both rural and urban areas, with an extensive network of roadways that serve the social and economic mobility needs of the region's residents, businesses and institutions. In recent years, transportation planning in the region has focused on connectivity issues... insuring consistent and quality connections between communities... as well as improving overcrowded roadways and correcting safety issues. And, more emphasis is now placed on public transit, filling the transportation gap for those residents who do not have access to vehicles.

In accordance with its long-standing practice to be open with the public regarding all issues and programs, the COG's transportation public participation process is intended to provide a two-way process of information and idea-sharing with the public and directly-affected communities. To that end, this process will:

- Provide information to the public (residents and the business community alike) on the decision-making process;
- Provide complete and timely information to the public, business community, transportation providers (including freight-haulers) on transportation issues and problems, the regional Long-Range Plan (LRP) and proposed projects programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP);
- Ensure the public understands alternative means of solving transportation problems;
- Ensure that all sectors of the public are, to the extent feasible, informed of these issues, and that all stakeholder groups are engaged in the process at various times;
- Provide meaningful forums for public comment on transportation problems and solutions and ensure concerns regarding specific impacts of proposed activities are known to the regional policy-making body;
- Solicit the needs of those under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to the transportation disadvantaged, minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, and low-income households. In addition, transportation agencies and organizations, freight-haulers, users of public transportation, and representatives of pedestrian and bicycle users will be targeted audiences regarding needs and facilities; and,
- Ensure that public comments are addressed by the COG in its decision-making process, that they are carefully and deliberately considered and that the public understands how the comments have been addressed.

A listing of potential stakeholders in the transportation planning process will be provided.

While the above purposes relate to two-way communication of issues with the traveling public, residents, the business community, freight shippers and others, there are programmatic reasons for a formal and inclusive public participation plan. Most notably, requirements of the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration (the federal agencies that fund most transportation improvements in the region) as well as the intent of the SC Department of Transportation stress public participation.

The above purposes will be fulfilled by a philosophical attitude by the COG staff that wishes to understand public sentiment and by the implementation of specific means of involving the public that:

- Responds to all reasonable comment on the needs of the region, concerns regarding impacts, etc.;
- Uses reasonable, early and on-going communication with those communities and groups likely to be most impacted by projects;

- Uses a variety of communication techniques (public workshops, small working sessions, one-on-one discussions, newspaper and radio communication, written reports and documents, etc.) that will reach the greatest number of people and solicit the best public discourse; and,
- Attempt to consider language and cultural differences in the solicitation and assessment of public comment.

Finally, this public participation plan is similar to such a plan previously adopted by the FLATS MPO. While the goals of the two processes are essentially the same, the mechanisms to be used differ somewhat due to the rural nature of the Pee Dee in contrast with the dense urban area served by the MPO.

COG REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BACKGROUND

The PDRCOG, along with nine other COGs across the State, established a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process as a Rural Planning Organization (RPO) in 1997 through a cooperative agreement with the SC Department of Transportation. The COG maintains this transportation planning program in order to meet appropriate federal and state requirements related to the development of a safe, effective, efficient and environmentally sensitive multi-modal transportation system for moving people and goods in the region. The RPO planning process also considers statewide transportation initiatives and those of surrounding regions.

The public participation process described here calls for two committees to guide RPO activities: a Policy Committee that contains voting membership and has final local approval and authority on all major transportation decisions, policies, and programs; and, the Study Team, which provides recommendations to the Policy Committee on those inputs used in the development of transportation plans and programs.

This Public Participation Process is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by the RPO and contains the goals and objectives described below, intended to ensure meaning public dialogue.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Remembering the purpose and intent of its transportation planning effort and the value of public participation, the COG has established the following broad goal and specific objectives to guide the process:

Goal: To efficiently and effectively interest, inform and involve the public in the regional transportation planning process, encouraging and accommodating their meaningful participation and input.

Objective 1: The RPO will encourage the involvement of all area citizens in the transportation planning process by:

- Seeking out under-involved populations within the region, including minority, low income, senior citizen and immobile populations.
- Targeting different audiences for each planning task, as necessary, including residents, business interests, transit providers, freight-haulers, and underserved and underrepresented populations.

- Holding public meetings at sites convenient to potentially affected citizens and promoting meetings in a manner appropriate to the population groups from which feedback is desired.

Objective 2: The RPO will actively engage the public in the transportation planning process according to the policies contained in this public participation process as well as State and Federal Law.

- The RPO will maintain an up-to-date database of all interested parties that have reasonable interest in transportation issues and need opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products. Such a list will include:
 - a. Elected Officials & Local Government Staff
 - b. Transportation Agencies (Port, Airports, Transit, etc.)
 - d. Local Print Media
 - e. Civic & Special Interest Groups
 - f. Libraries
 - g. The FLATS MPO
 - h. Federal, State and local land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, historic preservation and other environmental agencies
 - i. Public and private environmental organizations
 - j. Native American Tribal Councils
 - k. Private Freight Shippers
 - l. Representatives of Public Transportation Employees
 - m. Public transportation providers, including PDRTA and social service transportation providers
 - n. Private Providers of Transportation
 - o. Representatives of Users of Public Transportation, Pedestrians, and Bicycle
 - p. Representatives of the Disabled
 - q. Other interests as may from time-to-time be active and interested in the planning, development and of the transportation network and/or the environment.
- The COG will, when feasible, electronically mail meeting announcements to the contact list or to targeted groups for upcoming activities.

Objective 3: The COG will keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continuous basis, using a variety of written and graphic means.

- The COG will employ visual techniques to depict transportation conditions and plans, including charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, GIS, and/or computer simulation.
- The COG will make all publications and work products available electronically to the public via the COG web page (www.peedeecog.org) beginning January 1, 2010 and at the COG offices. The internet web site will be compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled users. The web site shall be updated and maintained to provide the most current and accurate transportation planning information available. The web site will, at a minimum, contain the following information:
 - Contact information (mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail)
 - Current COG transportation committee membership
 - Meeting calendars and agendas
 - Work products and publications (Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plans, Unified Planning Work Program,
 - Current By-Laws and Operating Procedures (including the Public Participation Plan and updates)

- The COG staff will be reasonably available to provide general and project-specific information at a central location during normal business hours and after hours at the request of community interest groups with reasonable notice.

Objective 4: The COG will produce a periodic newsletter highlighting, among other items, transportation issues, conditions and projects.

Objective 5: The COG will strive to continuously improve public participation and will revise this Plan and participation mechanisms as necessary to make them most effective.

- This Public Participation Plan will be reviewed and adopted, with revisions if necessary, at least every five (5) years in order to improve the effectiveness of public involvement. Such review and revision will be at least one (1) year prior to LRP update.

Objective 6: The COG will participate in public participation activities for individual transportation improvement projects from the planning phase through construction.

- The COG will actively assist the South Carolina Department of Transportation, local governments and transportation agencies in the development and implementation of public involvement techniques for planning and other studies, including Advanced Project Planning Reports (APPRs), Project Development and Environmental Studies.

Objective 7: The COG will maintain a Title VI Program including procedures to report unfair treatment of groups based on race, color, and national origin.

- The COG will maintain a log of Title VI complaints and forward to appropriate State and Federal agencies for review and guidance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

Public participation is an ongoing activity of the COG transportation planning program, including the regular posting and copying of SCDOT or regional notices and reports. Public participation is also an integral part of one-time activities such as Advance Project Planning Reports (APPRs) and regularly repeated activities such as the annual TIP process and the periodic LRP updates. This section contains descriptions of public participation tools currently being used by the RPO and specific activities if they are not covered in the description. Techniques discussed include:

- COG Website
- COG Master Public Contacts Database
- Legal Advertised Notices
- Display Ads
- Other Media
- Direct Mailings
- Press Releases
- Project Workshops
- Public Hearings
- Comment and Complaint Procedures
- Surveys
- Posters and Flyers
- Partner Agencies

In using one or more of these techniques, the intent is to expose the public in general or even target certain population groups or neighborhoods and communities to issues and proposals being considered, including, but not limited to:

- Age, Gender, Education, Income and Race/Ethnic-specific Issues and neighborhoods
- Potential Environmental areas and issues
- The various users of all portions of the transportation system in the region

To follow are the specific techniques that could be used, but others could be added as necessary. Not all will be used for every communication with the public or every meeting. However, the intent is to provide reasonable information about the transportation planning process, the proposals being considered and the discussions that are taking place.

COG Web Site:

Description: The web site will be utilized to provide basic information about the MPO process, committee membership, meeting times and contact information. Specifically:

- Work products, such as the drafted and adopted Public Participation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, TIP and LRP are to be available on the site.
- At present, the site will not take public comments, except by e-mail; however, based on public demand, that means of public comment may be enhanced.
- The site will provide helpful links to other transportation related sites at the local and national level.
- The web site will be maintained by the COG and regularly updated.

Activities: Intended to list current and topical information on regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications, related public events and work products.

COG Master Database:

Description: The RPO staff will maintain a master database of business, federal, state and local agencies and interested public bodies that have interest in transportation issues.

- The database includes committee membership, mailing information, phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses and web sites.
- The database is used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists, special interest groups and homeowner association contacts, and is the foundation of the newsletter mailing list.
- The database will be used to establish and maintain a list of email contacts for electronic meeting notification and announcements.

Activities: The database is used to enhance any or all public involvement activities.

Legal Advertised Notices:

Description: All notices of meetings and hearings of the RPO Transportation Policy Committee shall be posted pursuant to the South Carolina Open Public Meetings Act, including notices at the COG offices and newspaper notification, as follows:

- Notices shall be published a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the meeting of the Policy Body. The mailing and/or e-mailing of notices and press releases will be timed to be received locally within five (5) days of the meeting.
- When official public hearings and public comment periods for regional plans and programs are provided, meeting notices will be published at least ten (10) days prior to adoption.

- Notices will be in the Morning News. In addition, notices of sub-regional plans and programs funded by the RPO will be made in the newspaper of greatest circulation in the study area of the project or program. Specifically:
 - Chesterfield County
 - Cheraw Chronicle
 - Chesterfield County Shopper
 - Pageland Progressive
 - Darlington County
 - Darlington News and Press
 - Hartsville Messenger
 - Dillon County
 - Dillon Herald
 - Florence County
 - Lake City News and Post
 - Florence Morning News
 - Community Times
 - Marion County
 - Marion Star and Mullins Enterprise
 - Marion County Penny Saver
 - Marlboro County
 - The Shopper and Marlboro Herald

Not all such local media will be used for notices, just the most relevant considering the geographic scope and impact of the program or project.

The Policy Committee or other RPO committee, will consider hosting special meetings when needed to consider a special non-routine item that necessitates action but falls between regularly scheduled meetings. If a special meeting is called, the notice shall be published a minimum of three (3) days prior the meeting.

Activities: Regular and other meetings seeking public input are posted ten (10) days prior to the meeting.

Display Ads:

Description: The RPO may publish ads that are used to promote meetings that are not regularly scheduled, such as corridor studies or LRP workshops. They are published in selected newspapers in order to reach a larger audience than those that typically read legal notices.

Activities: Pubic awareness of project specific meetings, workshops, or open houses through block ads that will attract the most public attention.

Other Media:

Description: Opportunities will be sought for articles in newsletters and other periodic publications other than newspapers, including those produced by municipalities, homeowners’ associations, church groups, civic groups, or others that may have an interest in the transportation activities and issues in the Region. Opportunities will also be sought to present to civic and social agencies, participate on radio talk shows, and provide television news highlights and to utilize public service notices to create community awareness of planning activities.

Activities: Increased opportunities to make public aware of corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

Direct Mailings:

Description: Direct mailings will be an infrequent means of communicating with the public. When used, it could announce upcoming meetings or activities or provide information to a targeted area or group of people:

- Direct mailings are usually letters, but can be postcards or flyers.
- An area may be targeted for a direct mailing because of potential impacts from a project.
- Groups are targeted that may have an interest in a specific issue, for example, avid cyclists and pedestrians may be targeted for pathways and trail projects or for bicycle access on roadways to be widened.

Activities: Project-specific activities could be meetings, workshops, open houses, corridor studies, small area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

Press Releases:

Description: Formal press releases will be sent to The Morning News to announce upcoming meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by the RPO or its committees. When specific communities are affected by transportation plans, local newsletters and media will be sought to communicate the project status.

Activities: Corridor or other planning studies, workshops, open houses, public hearings, and other RPO activities.

Project Workshops:

Description: These are targeted public meetings that are generally open and informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. Short presentations may be given at these meetings, but their intent is to relay project information to the public and to solicit public comment and a sense of public priorities.

Activities: Long-range planning studies, corridor studies, and other major RPO activities.

Public Hearings:

Description: These are more formal public meetings used to solicit specific public comment on a project or issue being considered for adoption by the COG. Hearings provide a formal setting for citizens to provide comments to decision-making bodies. Meeting minutes are taken and maintained and language assistance may be available, if requested.

Activities: Long Range Transportation Plans, Transportation Improvement Program, corridor studies, Project Development & Environmental studies, and other planning studies as needed for other MPO activities.

Comment and Complaint Procedure:

Description: Comment forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues being presented at a workshop or other public meetings. They could also accompany documents made available for public review. Comment forms can be very general in nature, or can ask for very specific feedback. For example, a comment form may ask for comments on specific alignment alternatives being considered during a corridor study, or may ask for a person's general feelings

about any aspect of transportation. Comment forms can also be included in publications and on web sites to solicit input regarding the subject of the publication and/or the format of the publication or web site.

In compliance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, these comment opportunities also allow for complaints associated with minority groups as described in Title VI of the U.S. Code (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.). Such complaints will be formally logged in at the COG offices and reviewed according to the Department of Justice's investigation procedures manual, then forwarded to SCDOT and FHWA for further review and direction. Title VI complaints may be e-mailed, mailed by post or communicated directly by calling or visiting the COG.

Activities: Public workshops, open houses, hearings and other meetings, accompany RPO documents on public display, general RPO activities.

Surveys:

Description: Surveys can be used when very specific input from the public is desired. A survey can be used in place of comment cards to judge opinion on specific issues or options (such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study). Surveys are also used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies. Phone and mail surveys are the most common methods to be used, along with meeting comment cards.

Activities: Conduct surveys on issues and needs to provide input into the plans.

Posters and Flyers:

Description: Posters and flyers are used to announce meetings and events and are distributed to public places such as City/Town Halls, libraries and community centers for display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of a meeting, the time(s) and location(s), and contact information. Posters and flyers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using direct mailings and/or newsletters.

Activities: Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, regular and special MPO activities.

Partner Agencies

Description: The MPO is dependent upon Federal and State guidelines for planning transportation projects. Continued interaction and communication enables the MPO to

Activities: All activities and programs will be communicated with partner agencies.

ADOPTION AND COORDINATION OF PLANS AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES:

Various transportation elements and activities need formal adoption, with the following procedures being applicable:

Participation Plan: This is official policy of the COG/RPO and is adopted and may be amended by the Policy Body after a public comment period of 45 calendar days prior to the adoption of the Public Participation Plan and/or any amendments. Notice of the comment period will be advertised in a newspaper of general

circulation and various other publications as necessary prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period. Notice will also be mailed to the entire RPO mailing list prior to the start of the 45-day comment period. Coordination of the Public Participation Process with statewide Public Participation efforts will be undertaken wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduce redundancies and costs of statewide and regional planning efforts alike.

Long-Range Transportation Plan: A public comment period of not less than 30 calendar days is required prior to adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan by the Policy Committee.

Transportation Improvement Program and the Unified Planning Work Program: A public comment period of not less than 10 calendar days is required prior to the adoption of these documents or any formal amendments or updates

Consultation Process with Other Agencies and Organizations: A continuing consultation process will allow many organizations and agencies to review and have the opportunity to comment on the LRTP, TIP and other critical milestone documents and steps in the transportation planning process. The RPO will solicit feedback from relevant federal, state and local government agencies and non-profits that receive federal funding from those U.S. departments other than DOT for transportation related functions (other than emergency assistance). This list will be kept updated. Agencies not wishing to be on the list will be required to send an official letter requesting to be removed from the list and these letters will be kept for documentation. The ability for the agencies and groups to effectively provide input and comment requires a reasonable time frame to respond, with current policy being 10 working days.

The agencies and organizations to be queried regarding their interest in transportation issues in general and specific plans and programs will include, but will not be limited to:

- South Carolina Department of Transportation, various divisions (including transit)
- South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority
- Chesterfield County & municipalities
- Darlington County & municipalities
- Dillon County and municipalities
- Florence County & municipalities
- Marion County & municipalities
- Marlboro County & municipalities
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

EVALUATION OF METHODS

In order to determine the effectiveness of the public involvement tools, they must be evaluated on a periodic basis. Such evaluations will be on an informal basis, but will be sufficiently detailed to guide the activities of the next program year. Effectiveness of the programs will be based on:

- The number of responses or comments by type and method (surveys, on-line comments, meeting comment cards, phone calls, etc.)

- The geographic dispersion of comments received, by County
- The number of comments by type of transportation activity (LRP, TIP, etc.)
- The number of published articles, notices or other public notices of transportation activities and meetings
- The number and frequency of targeted population groups from which input is received
- The number of people attending meetings

In assessing the above information, comparison will be made the methods of contact, means of notices or advertisement, etc. in order to make correlation between action and response.

Overall, the RPO will continually strive to improve public involvement. Improvements should be made to increase public awareness and to improve the quantity and quality of information provided to the public. The decisions made as to which communications methods are most effective will be made by the RPO alone, but by virtue of the results of the above evaluation.

No performance goals are established here, as there is little information regarding past effectiveness on which to gauge activities.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

The following terms have been used in this Public Participation Plan. These are non-technical definitions that may not meet federal or state laws and policies, but are loosely defined here in order to better assist the public in understanding the transportation planning and implementation process and their potential role in influencing these topics:

APPR: Advance Project Planning Reports, initial documents prepared by the SCDOT and COG that consider the purpose and need for a transportation improvement, reasonable alternatives and general impacts on the natural and man-made environment and other considerations.

COG: The Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments or PDRCOG, a non-profit organization that works cooperatively with the SCDOT to manage transportation issues, projects and programs in the six counties of Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion and Marlboro. It serves as the RPO, or rural planning organization.

ENVIRONEMNTAL: A broad term that indicates the range of natural resources that are generally protected by federal and/or state laws as well as the procedures that require consideration of impacts or effects on these resources prior to spending public funds on right-of-way or construction. The environmental process requires the consideration of such impacts in the initial planning of alternatives; they are part of the process of deciding which alternative may be the best. The environmental process also includes impacts on humans (dislocation, sensitive neighborhoods, historic resources, etc.). Environmental issues and considerations routinely addressed in preliminary planning and final design include:

- A general project description – what is proposed, clearly communicating a purpose and need for improvements.

- Existing transportation problems – available data on traffic, projected traffic, accidents, road conditions and other issues that indicate a problem that needs resolution.
- General area conditions – the surrounding area development.
- Relevant alternatives being considered for the proposal (including different type facilities, different locations or routes, and the “Do Nothing” option).
- The natural environment and possible impacts on: Shorelines, beaches and dunes, estuaries and coastal issues, if applicable; Wetlands and Flood Prone Areas; Vegetation and wildlife resources (particularly federally endangered and threatened animal and plant species); Historic areas and structures; Wild and Scenic Rivers; Parks and wilderness areas at the federal, state and local level; Land use and Zoning; Solid waste management; Hazardous or toxic substances; Water resources, including groundwater; Water supply and distribution systems; Sewer collection and treatment facilities; Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898) regarding possible disproportionate adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations; Streets, traffic and parking; Air quality from increased or decreased traffic congestion; and, Noise.
- Displacement of homes and businesses as well as social disruption (impact on neighborhoods, not just buildings).
- Method of construction (including phasing, etc.);
- Permits needed;
- Public notification/controversy.
- Costs and funding.

When the above are considered, the Cumulative impacts (a build-ups of impacts over time) and Indirect impacts (secondary impacts, not just direct disruption) are also taken into account. These assessments may be supplemented by other considerations and are usually accompanied by: Maps (including USGS Maps); Aerial photographs; Any environmental reports previously prepared; and Any correspondence or information from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Army Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Services, SC Department of Natural Resources or any of the various divisions of the SSC Department of Health and Environmental Control.

FHWA: The Federal Highway Administration, the cognizant federal agency that monitors SCDOT and other partners is transportation planning and implementation.

LRP: A Long Range Plan for transportation, providing a periodic (usually every five years) update and formal analysis of transportation needs for the region. This usually uses traffic modeling and other data to identify current and future problems with roadways and other means of transportation, forecast future problems at least 20 years hence, and develop a list of improvements that can assist in solving the problems or otherwise meeting the travel needs of the public and freight. This list of priority projects will be cost-constrained; that is, it will be a list of improvements that can be accomplished with funds that are identified in the Plan.

MPO: The Metropolitan Planning Organization, which serves a similar function to the COG (and RPO) in terms of transportation planning and project/program

implementation. There is one MPO in the six-county Pee Dee region... the FLATS area that covers the Florence urban area.

RPO: The Rural Planning Organization (COG), responsible for transportation planning and project/program implementation in the balance of the six-county region (all but the FLATS area).

SCDOT: The South Carolina Department of Transportation, a state agency responsible for planning and implementing various aspects of the broad transportation system of the state. SCDOT is a partner with various metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and rural planning organizations (RPOs)

TIP: Transportation Improvement Program – An annual schedule of high priority projects for which funding is at least partially allocated. It accounts for all projects to receive funding and the funding source. It is a collaborative effort of the COG and the SCDOT and is adopted by the COG Policy body before being finalized by the SCDOT Commission.

END

