

# **PLANS, POLICIES AND PROCESSES OF THE MPO**

The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO is responsible for creating and maintaining many documents essential to the on-going transportation planning effort. These documents guide the transportation planning process and prioritize the implementation of needed transportation projects. This section provides the name and descriptions of each such document, as well as how each is used by the MPO. Copies of plans are distributed to TAC and TCC members as part of the adoption process. If you would like a printed copy of a plan, please contact MPO staff. Plans are available on-line at <http://www.cityofws.org/Home/Departments/Transportation/Planning/Articles/PlansAndStudies>.

## **FEDERALLY REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

### **LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)**

The primary purpose of the LRTP is to guide the planning and development of the multi-modal transportation system in the urban area. Whereas the Comprehensive Transportation Plan is “what we want”, with no time or financial constraints, the LRTP has a minimum 20-year planning horizon and is fiscally constrained.

Two other major differences between the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the LRTP are that in the LRTP projects are separated into horizon years in which projects can reasonably be expected to be completed; and, future funding must be estimated and specifically identified for each project. This usually means that many projects included in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan are NOT included in the LRTP.

Finally, because of air quality requirements, the projects in the LRTP must undergo an air quality conformity analysis to determine whether their construction will have an adverse impact on the air quality in the MPO and regionally.

Under recently updated FHWA guidelines, the LRTP must be updated every four (4) years. The most recent LRTP is the 2035 Plan, adopted in early 2009.

### **AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY DETERMINATION**

The concept of transportation conformity was introduced in the Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1977 which included a provision to ensure that transportation investments conform to the state's air quality plan for meeting the Federal air quality standards. Conformity requirements were given more teeth in the CAA Amendments of 1990. The regulations continue to be updated for pollutant standards and detail the process for transportation agencies to demonstrate conformity and ensure that air pollutant emissions from transportation sources are consistent with air quality goals.

Conformity applies to long-range transportation plans, transportation improvement programs (TIPs) and transportation projects funded or approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Conformity requirements apply in areas that are either non-attainment or in maintenance for air quality standards. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), as a part of a formal interagency consultation process that includes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), FHWA, FTA, and State and local transportation and air quality agencies, make conformity determinations. Conformity determinations must be made at least every four years, or when transportation plans or TIPs are updated. Also, conformity determinations must be made within 12 months for an area being designated by EPA as nonattainment for a pollutant or 18 months of certain actions on the state's air quality plan. The MPO must meet conformity requirements or there is a conformity lapse and the use of Federal transportation funds is restricted. Exceptions include exempt projects such as: projects that do not increase capacity, safety projects, Transportation Control Measures in EPA-approved SIPs, and project phases that are already authorized by the FHWA/FTA.

The Winston-Salem Urban Area 2035 Transportation Plan and Air Quality Conformity Analysis Report and Determination were adopted by the TAC on January 29, 2009 and approved by the FHWA on March 6, 2009. The next Air Quality Conformity Determination will occur with the adoption of the 2012-2018 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program in the summer of 2011.

## **CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESSES (CMP)**

For decades, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has worked with the City of Winston-Salem and the other municipalities in the Winston-Salem Urban Area to address most of the major existing traffic congestion problems and conditions. These agencies have developed and used a variety of tools to manage congestion in the urban area including: an extensive computerized traffic signal system; the innovative and nationally recognized Mobility Manager project implemented by the Winston-Salem Transit Authority's (WSTA); the City's traffic safety improvement program to minimize congestion related to accidents; and an expanding menu of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) techniques such as variable message signs and traffic surveillance camera systems. These components were described and included in the Congestion Management Plan section of the 1999 and 2002 editions of the 2025 Multi-modal Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Winston-Salem Urban Area.

While NCDOT, the City of Winston-Salem, and some other municipalities like the Town of Kernersville, have developed these tools independently over time, they have not been developed as a part of an entire management system for the urban area. In order to maximize our return on transportation investments, we must effectively manage traffic congestion on a systematic approach.

Development and adoption of a Congestion Management System (CMS) was first required under the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) for Transportation Management Areas (TMA) with an urbanized population over 200,000. With the inception of SAFETEA-LU in 2005, a new rule was established requiring a TMA to include in its

planning procedures a congestion management “process” instead of “system”, reflecting the goal that Congestion Management Processes (CMP) be an integral part of developing a LRTP and TIP for a TMA.

The Congestion Management Processes document for the Winston-Salem Urban Area is included as part of the 2035 Long Range Transportation (LRTP) adopted by the TAC in 2009. The purposes of the CMP are to identify and address most of the major existing traffic congestion problems and conditions in the Winston-Salem Urban Area and to identify a variety of tools and techniques that can be used to mitigate the identified problems. MPO staff will complete a report biennially to track accomplishment of the CMP’s goals/objectives.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY**

The Public Participation Policy reflects the commitment of the MPO to public participation for all transportation plans and air quality conformity analysis reports. Under the policy, the public participation process will provide early and continuing involvement; full public access to citizens, public agencies, providers of public transportation, and segments of the community affected by transportation plans; and clear, accurate and timely information.

The current Public Participation Policy was adopted in 2007 and is included in the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The previous Public Participation Policy was approved as part of the 2030 LRTP in 2005. The current plan is based upon the previous plan, but expands on it in a number of ways. Among these are a structured approach consisting of three levels of public involvement, depending on the nature and scope of each project or plan. The current plan also takes into account new methods and technologies which gives the public greater access to the transportation planning process.

The MPO will hold a public hearing every three years to seek input and feedback on the MPO’s public involvement efforts.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PLAN**

Environmental Justice (EJ) comes from an Executive Order (EO) 12898 signed in February 1994 requiring that the effect on minority and low-income (MLI) populations be addressed in all federal actions, including programs, policies, and activities. The three main principles of EJ are: 1) avoid or minimize disproportionate and adverse human health, environmental, social, and or economic effects on MLI; 2) ensure full and fair participation of all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and, 3) prevent denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by MLI populations.

Department of Transportation Order (DOT) 5610.2 was issued in response to the EO 12898, and set forth policies to address EJ concerns in the early administration and development of transportation programs, policies and activities. The Federal Highway Administration followed DOT’s Order with Order 6640.23.

To ensure implementation and practice of the three main principles of Environmental Justice, the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO adopted an Environmental Justice Plan as part of the 2035 Long Range Transportation (LRTP) in early 2009. The Plan includes specific goals and procedures the MPO will follow to involve minority and low-income populations in transportation planning processes and avoid disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations. The EJ Plan will be updated as part of the next LRTP.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION-HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN**

In 2007, the Winston-Salem Department of Transportation (WSDOT) assembled together community stakeholders, transportation service providers and other governmental officials in the crafting a Human Services Coordination Plan. This plan was developed to identify and address the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, and strategies and priorities for meeting these local needs. These efforts culminated in February 2008 when the Winston-Salem TAC adopted the Public Transportation–Human Services Coordination Plan for the Winston-Salem Urban Area. The TAC resolution not only endorsed the plan but requested the Governor designate the Winston-Salem Urban Area as the eligible recipient of federal funds to address the concerns outlined in the plan.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), requires the development of a locally developed coordinated plan such as the one adopted by Winston-Salem TAC, in order to be designated eligible to receive federal funds from two Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) (FTA Section 5316) and New Freedom (FTA Section 5317). The JARC program was established to address the unique transportation challenges faced by low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment. The New Freedom grant program aims to provide additional tools to Americans with disabilities to overcome barriers to employment and seeks to expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO issues an annual call for projects that are deemed eligible to receive capital or operations funding for services that meet the guidelines of the both the Public Transportation-Human Services Coordination Plan and the guidelines for the JARC or New Freedom programs. The submitted proposals are scored by Greensboro MPO staff and funding allocated by Winston-Salem MPO staff. Project funding is approved by the TAC and later by the FTA.

## **UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)**

Each year the Winston-Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is required to develop and approve a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP identifies what transportation planning projects and work tasks will be completed during the fiscal year and the amount of federal and State highway and transit planning funds that will be used to complete the work, plus the required State and local matches. Depending on the

specific funding source, tasks funded through the UPWP are eligible for reimbursement of 80-90% of their cost from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) through the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

The Winston-Salem Urban Area UPWP identifies four (4) separate federal funding sources for conducting transportation planning and they are shown in Table 1 of the UPWP. They include:

- Statewide Planning and Research Programs (SPR) Funds – These funds are provided to the NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch to conduct work for the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO.
- FHWA Section 104 (f) Funds – These funds are the primary funding source dedicated to the MPO to perform transportation planning as required by various State and Federal laws and regulations. These funds require a 20% local match.
- FTA Section 5303 Funds – These funds are used for transit planning in the urban area. The FTA provides 80% of these funds with a 10% match from NCDOT and a local match of 10% from the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO.
- FHWA Surface Transportation Program – Direct Attributable (STP-DA) Funds – These funds are available to the MPO to supplement the Section 104 (f) funds and are shown in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The MPO has used these funds to conduct a variety of large projects and studies including road feasibility studies, streetcar planning, the feasibility of roundabouts at various intersections, purchase of aerial photography services, etc. These funds also require a 20% local match.

The local match requirements will be shared by all members of the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO as defined in the updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The UPWP for the current fiscal year is included in the Appendix. The funds are allocated to different work tasks as detailed in the *Prospectus of Transportation Planning Work Tasks, Products and Responsibilities for the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO*, also included in the Appendix.

## **STATE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

### **COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP)**

North Carolina General Statute 136-66.2 requires each municipality or MPO, with the cooperation of NCDOT, to develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) serving present and anticipated travel demand in and around the municipality or MPO. The CTP is based on the best information available including, but not limited to, population growth, economic conditions and prospects, and patterns of land development in and around the municipality, and provides for the safe and effective use of the transportation system.

State law previously required jurisdictions to develop a Thoroughfare Plan which included only one element of the transportation system—roads. The CTP is multi-modal, and includes the highway element along with transit, bicycle and pedestrian elements. The CTP is a series of five sheets. Each sheet is on the same base map with the same scale. The CTP sheets include: Adoption Sheet; Highway Map; Public Transportation and Rail Map; Bicycle Map; and in future versions, a Pedestrian Map. Independently, the highway, public transportation and rail map, and bicycle map offer insight into the future modal elements for an area. Together, the maps form an all-inclusive look at the transportation system.

The primary purpose of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan is to guide the development of the urban area transportation system in a manner consistent with changing traffic demands and needs. The CTP Maps and Technical Report document all expected projects at build-out with no regard to funding and/or timing constraints. A copy of the adopted Highway Map of the CTP is included in the back pocket of this manual binder.

## **SPOT STRATEGIC PRIORITIZATION PROCESS**

As part of NCDOT's transportation reform efforts, the Strategic Planning Office of Transportation (SPOT) developed a new Strategic Project Prioritization process in 2009. The purpose of the SPOT process is to remove politics from the transportation planning process and assure professional, transparent and strategic decision making for transportation projects. The process uses facts about pavement condition, traffic congestion and road safety, as well as input from MPOs, RPOs and NCDOT staff to determine the Department's priorities. The data-driven approach will place projects for all modes of transportation in priority order, based on the department's goals, and serve as the primary input source for development of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The SPOT Prioritization Process replaces the Transportation Needs Report process.

The first step in the SPOT process is submission of a prioritized list of projects by MPOs, RPOs and NCDOT Divisions and Departments. To develop its list of prioritized projects, the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO will continue to use its criteria and procedures previously adopted for the Transportation Needs process. The adopted system ranks projects into priority order by evaluating their benefits in improving air quality, reducing congestion, increasing safety, and providing other transportation benefits to the community.

Submitted projects are then be evaluated and ranked by SPOT staff based on established criteria. To score projects against similar projects, each Highway project is classified under one of the Department's three primary goals (Safety, Mobility, Infrastructure Health) and three tiers (Statewide, Regional, and Subregional). Non-Highway transportation projects are ranked based on need, with NCDOT working closely with local officials to examine each project. Urban loop projects are considered under a separate prioritization process.

After the initial ranking, NCDOT staff examines the scores and applies financial and scheduling constraints, including compliance with Federal and State laws regarding funding distribution and air quality standards, as well as taking into consideration which projects are technically ready. The resulting list is the draft State Transportation Improvement Program

(STIP) which programs State and federal funding for roadway, bridge, safety, public transportation, passenger rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and enhancement projects transportation projects for the upcoming seven year period. After consultation with MPOs and RPOs, a public comment period and appropriate revisions, the STIP is adopted by the NC Board of Transportation.

## **METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (MTIP)**

The Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) is a seven-year (7) program adopted by the MPO every other year. The MTIP is a subset of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and includes only those project from the STIP planned for the specific metropolitan area. The MTIP schedules State and Federal funding for roadway, bridge, safety, public transportation, passenger rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and enhancement projects transportation projects in the metropolitan area. The MTIP details the Project ID Number, Location and Description, Length, Total Estimated Cost, Funding Source, and Schedule.

Projects in the MTIP must be on the MPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Projects must be included on the MTIP to be eligible for certain Federal transportation funding sources.

A draft MTIP is prepared by NCDOT based on the STIP and provided to the MPO for public input. The MTIP must be adopted biennially by the TAC and amended as necessary when funded projects change or when funding for additional projects is obtained. After approval by the TAC, the MTIP and subsequent amendments are submitted to the NCDOT for approval and inclusion in the STIP.

## **OTHER PLANS OF THE MPO**

### **COLLECTOR STREET PLAN**

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) classifies roads into freeway, expressways, boulevards and major and minor thoroughfares. To identify a finer grain street and highway system for local planning purposes, an additional classification of road type needs to be included – Collector Streets. The primary function of a collector street is to gather traffic from the local residential or commercial street system and deliver it to the closest minor or major thoroughfare. Collector streets provide both local access to adjacent properties and mobility for vehicles and other modes of transportation. Collector streets generally are designed for shorter trip lengths and have lower traffic volumes. The increased connectivity afforded by collector streets creates safer routes for sidewalks and pedestrians, bicycles and school buses and can relieve thoroughfares of short trip congestion.

The 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan adopted in 2005 included a Collector Street Inventory that provided the basis for evaluating existing and future streets to be included in the Collector Street Plan. The need for a comprehensive Collector Street Plan became crucial

with the adoption of street standards by the Winston-Salem City Council and the Forsyth County Commissioners in 2006 and 2007. The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO staff worked with the City-County Planning Board staff and Planning staff from King and Davidson, Davie and Stokes Counties to identify the existing streets which currently function as collector Streets and proposed potential future collector Streets.

The Collector Street Plan provides the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO with the mapping and technical information to encourage the construction of the collector street network as development occurs. The plan includes maps that show existing and future collector streets. It is important to note that the maps show proposed collectors in generalized locations to provide the desired level of connectivity, reasonable access to adjacent parcels, and to minimize impacts to streams, ponds and other environmental features. The maps are not precise and do not reflect the actual location or alignment of a proposed facility. Decisions about future alignments are made as a part of the development review process.

The Collector Street Plan was adopted by the TAC and City of Winston-Salem in 2007 and incorporated into the Village of Clemmons Transportation Plan adopted in 2009. The Collector Street Plan works in conjunction with the Sidewalk and Pedestrian Facilities Plan. An update to the Collector Street Plan will be done in conjunction with the CTP update.

## **COMPREHENSIVE BICYCLE MASTER PLAN**

The Winston-Salem Urban Area Comprehensive Bicycle Master Plan was adopted in 2005 to improve the safety, efficiency, and convenience of the area's on-street bicycle network. The plan was also designed to support the integration of bicycle planning into the long-range growth management efforts of the community, as detailed in the *Legacy Development Guide*.

The Bicycle Plan is divided into five chapters that cover everything from vision and goals, existing conditions, recommended roadway improvements, facility design guidelines, implementation strategies, and numerous maps and supplemental information.

The Bicycle Plan guides current bicycle facility improvement efforts in terms of selecting and prioritizing streets segments to receive bicycle accommodations. Updates to the plan are likely to begin once the on-street bicycle facilities network begins to take shape and will be included in a plan that comprehensively examines the active transportation system.

## **SIDEWALK AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES PLAN**

The Winston-Salem Urban Area Sidewalk and Pedestrian Facilities Plan was adopted in July 2007 to improve the safety, efficiency, and convenience of the area's pedestrian infrastructure. The Plan supports the vision of the 2035 Multi-Modal Long-Range Transportation Plan and expands upon the recommendations of the *Legacy Development Guide*.

The Sidewalk and Pedestrian Facilities Plan provides a vision for the area's pedestrian infrastructure as well as an inventory of existing conditions, recommendations for future facilities, design guidelines, and a suggested process for ranking potential sidewalk projects.

The Plan serves primarily as a guide for how to properly integrate pedestrian facilities into the current infrastructure, so it is likely to be current for many years. However, specific recommendations for pedestrian accommodations will require updates as facilities are constructed.

## **GREENWAY PLAN**

With the adoption of the *Legacy Development Guide* in 2001, the City of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County identified the need to provide open spaces for conservation, recreation, and communing with nature. *Legacy* recommended the completion of a comprehensive open space, parks, and greenway plan. The *Greenway Plan - Winston-Salem and Forsyth County 2015* identifies 34 miles of proposed greenways and greenway connectors to expand the existing greenway system by 2015. The Plan provides policies and procedures, as well as a schedule and action plan for development of the greenway system.

The *Greenway Plan* was adopted by Forsyth County, the City of Winston-Salem, the Town of Lewisville and the Village of Clemmons in 2005. The Plan was adopted by the TAC of the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO as part of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan in 2005. An update to the *Greenway Plan* is currently in progress and is expected to be completed in the fall of 2010.