

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS



Serving Local Governments in South Carolina's Midlands



Central Midlands Council of Governments
236 Stoneridge Drive, Columbia, South Carolina, 29210
(803) 376-5390 Fax(803)376-5394
www.centralmidlands.org

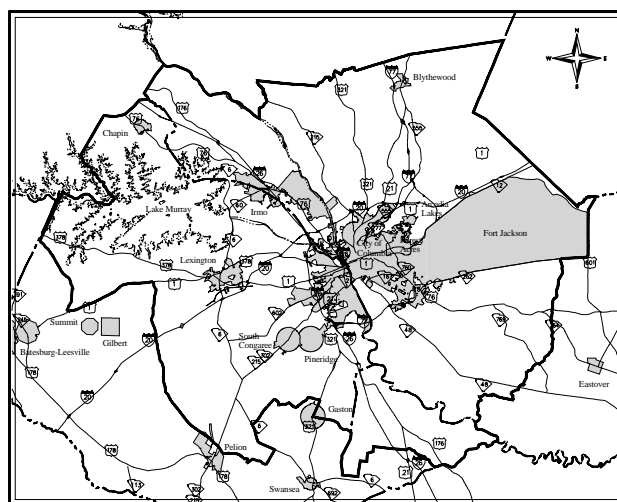
HISTORY AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) was formed in 1969 through the cooperative agreements of local units of government as allowed under Act 487 of 1967. The organization later received designation as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning in the Columbia, South Carolina urbanized area and was recognized as the "designated recipient" for public mass transit funds for the urban area. While the initial area of responsibility consisted of 182 square miles of Richland and Lexington Counties, today the area covers over 980 square miles. **(See Figure 1)**

The organization is responsible for transportation (highway and public transit) planning, funding program development, and program management for the metropolitan area. The primary responsibility is to identify needs and prioritize local highway and mass transit system improvements.

FIGURE 1

Columbia Metropolitan Area Planning Boundary



Legend:

-  COATS Boundary
-  Major Roads
-  Lakes & Rivers
-  County Boundaries
-  Municipalities

Scale in Miles
0 2 4 6 8 10

Date prepared: August 25, 1997.
Copyright by Central Midlands Council of Governments.
Central Midlands Council of Governments disclaims responsibility for damages or liability that may arise from the use of this information. All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure accuracy.

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (TEA-21)

The US Congress developed and passed the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century in 1998, also known as TEA-21. TEA-21 builds on the initiatives established in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), which was the last major authorizing legislation for surface transportation funding. TEA-21 combines the continuation and improvement of current programs with new initiatives. The goals of TEA-21 are as follows:

- To improve safety as traffic continues to increase at record levels
- To protect and enhance communities and the natural environment as we develop transportation systems
- To advance America's economic growth and competitiveness through efficient and flexible transportation networks

THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

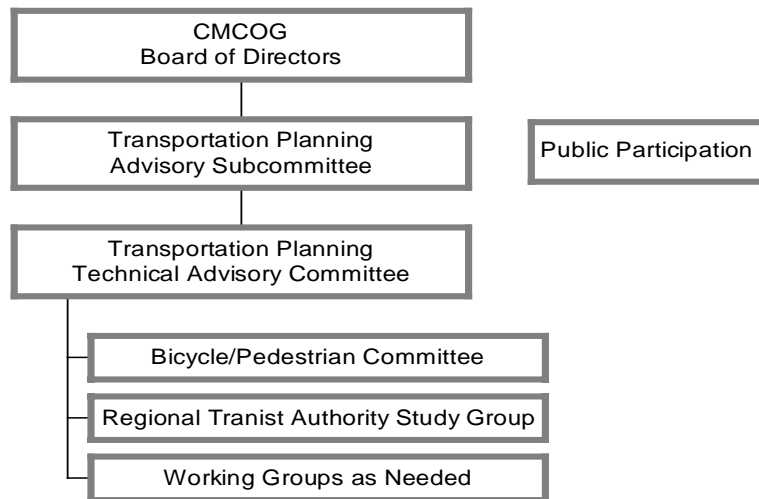
CMCOG’s Board of Directors serve as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Columbia, South Carolina urbanized area. The Board consists of 45 members made up of a diverse, multi-jurisdictional, group of local elected officials (62%) and area citizen representatives. It is responsible for the formal adoption of the Long Range Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and the five-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- Primary jurisdictions affected by the MPO's transportation planning responsibility are:

Columbia	Richland County	Forest Acres	Blythewood
Arcadia Lakes	Lexington	Springdale	Lexington County
Cayce	Irmo	Chapin	South Congaree
West Columbia	Pineridge	Fort Jackson	Gaston (Portion)

- The MPO utilizes advisory committees and public participation to carrying out its' transportation planning functions.
- State DOT's must adhere to MPO transportation plans and priority ratings in initiating and completing highway and mass transit system improvements.

MPO Transportation Planning Organizational Structure



Transportation Planning Advisory Subcommittee

The role of the Transportation Planning Advisory Subcommittee is to assist with the identification of transportation and transit issues and system improvements and to incorporate the needs of local area residents and jurisdictions into the planning process.

Members of the Advisory Subcommittee

City of Columbia	Lexington County Council
Richland County Council	Town of Springdale
SCANA/SCE&G Columbia Transit System	Dial-A-Ride Transit
SC Protection & Advocacy for the Disabled	

Transportation Planning Technical Advisory Committee

In 1994, formation of the Transportation Planning Technical Advisory Committee, for the first time, formalized the involvement of local government planning officials and air, rail, motor freight and transit interests in the CMCOG-MPO transportation planning process.

The primary function of the committee is to research and analyze potential transportation projects and issues faced by the CMCOG-MPO planning area. This results in the development of consensus driven recommendations for the Transportation Planning Advisory Committee to consider and ultimately pass on to the CMCOG-MPO for formal adoption.

Members of the Technical Advisory Committee

CMCOG Transportation Planning Staff	City of Columbia Planning Staff	
Lexington County Planning Staff	Richland County Planning Staff	
SCDOT Office of Traffic Engineering	SCDOT Office of Planning	SCDOT Division of Mass Transit
SCDOT Office of Pre-Construction	Federal Highway Administration	Columbia Metropolitan Airport
City of Columbia Traffic Engineering Dept. Carolina Cyclers	Rail Transportation Industry Local Motor Freight Organization	
Lexington County "C" Fund Committee	Local Public Transit Provider	
Richland County "C" Fund Committee	Richland School District 2	
Richland/Lexington School District 5	Lexington School District 1	

Public Participation Process

The transportation planning process affords opportunities for many parties to be informed and involved. An important factor in the planning process is the inclusion of the public. Every effort is made to allow local citizens to comment on proposed transportation issues and projects. The goal of CMCOG-MPO's public participation process is to ensure early and ongoing public notification about and participation in the transportation planning process. Detailed information about the public participation process can be found in the document "Procedures For Public Participation".

- News releases and legal notices are published which announce transportation planning activities and functions and the availability of documents for public review and comment.
- Public meetings are conducted at centrally located facilities in each jurisdiction that may be impacted by a particular issue.
- Area-wide public review and comment periods are held in which documents are distributed to local area libraries. Multiple notices are run in local newspapers and local jurisdictions receive notices announcing the availability of documents.
- CMCOG's transportation planning process also complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act with regard to public meeting facility accessibility and the provision of accessible formats for materials.

A report of comments and responses will be made to committees prior to official action being taken on a plan, program or project.

RESULTS OF THE PROCESS

The two documents that result from the Central Midlands Metropolitan Area's Transportation Planning Process are a Transportation Improvement Program and a Long Range Multi-Modal Transportation Plan. Both documents are revised and updated on an as-needed basis.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a five-year program establishing project priorities and annual program funding for preliminary engineering, right-of-way, construction, etc.

Long Range Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

The development of a Long Range Multi-modal Transportation Plan provides the metropolitan area with a forecast of the transportation system needs, proposed improvement projects, and funding scheme for a twenty (20) year period. At a minimum, the plan addresses the following transportation issues:

Air Quality	Highways
Public Transit (Bus)	Bicycling
Congestion Management	Motor Freight
Rail Freight	Airports
Passenger Rail Service	

TEA-21 requires consideration of several broad areas in the transportation planning process:

- Support of the economic vitality of the metropolitan area
- Increase in the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Protection and enhancement of the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life
- Enhancement of the integration and connectivity of the transportation system
- Promotion of efficient system management and operation
- Emphasis on the preservation of the existing transportation system