

FY2020-2023
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)
(Amended)

Prepared for:
Auburn-Opelika
Metropolitan Planning Organization
(AOMPO)

Prepared by:
Lee-Russell Council of Governments
Opelika, AL

Adopted:
November 6, 2019

Auburn-Opelika
Metropolitan Planning Organization
(AOMPO)

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(Amended)

This document is available at www.lrcog.com

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This Public Participation Plan (PPP) was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), and local governments in partial fulfillment of requirements in Title 23 USC 134 and 135, amended by FAST Act Sections 1201 and 1202, December 4, 2015. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Auburn-Opelika
Metropolitan Planning Organization

**FY2020 Policy Board and
Advisory Committee Membership**

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David Canon	Councilman, City of Opelika
Tommy Dawson	Councilman, City of Auburn
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Steve Graben	Region Engineer, ALDOT Southeast Region
Johnny Lawrence	Commissioner, Lee County
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D.E. Phillips, Jr.*	State Local Transportation Engineer, ALDOT
Courtney Roberts*	Program Analyst, Federal Transit Administration

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Justin Hardee, Chair	County Engineer, Lee County
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Ben Burmester	Auburn University Campus Planning
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Forrest Cotten	Planning Director, City of Auburn
Brandy Ezelle	Traffic Engineer, City of Auburn
Alison Frazier	Engineering Service Director, City Engineer, City of Auburn
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Bill James	Public Safety Director, City of Auburn
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Matt Mosley	Planning Director, City of Opelika
Jeffrey LaMondia	Civil Engineering Professor, Auburn University
John McEachern	Police Chief, City of Opelika
Lisa Sandt	Executive Director, LRCOG
Daniel Wyatt	Transportation Planner, LRCOG
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Jim Buston, III*	Information Technology Director, City of Auburn
Michael Hora*	Assistant State Local Transportation Engineer, Planning, ALDOT
Steve Graben*	Region Engineer, ALDOT Southeast Region
Stephen Dawe*	Chief Technology Officer, City of Opelika
Richie LaGrand*	Chief Appraiser, Lee County
Courtney Roberts*	Program Analyst, Federal Transit Administration

Citizen Advisory Committee

Amy Crew	Auburn
Rex Griffin	Auburn
Dr. Johnny Green	Auburn
Dr. Larry Molt	Auburn
J.R. Smith	Auburn
Aiesha Gentry	Opelika
David McCain	Opelika
Todd Rauch	Opelika
Sherri Reese	Opelika
Kenneth Ridley	Opelika
Butch Brock	Lee County
VACANT	Lee County
VACANT	Lee County
VACANT	Lee County
VACANT	Lee County

* indicates non-voting status

MPO RESOLUTION 2019-16

**Adopting the Amended FY2020-2023 Public Participation Plan (PPP)
for the Auburn-Opelika MPO**

WHEREAS, the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization (AOMPO) is the organization designated by the Governor of the State of Alabama as being responsible, together with the State of Alabama, for implementing the applicable provisions of 23 USC 134 and 135 (amended by FAST Act, Section 1201 and 1202, December, 2015); 42 USC 2000d-1, 7401; 23 CFR 450 and 500; 40 CFR 51 and 93; and

WHEREAS, Title 23 CFR 450.316(a) et al, provides that the MPOs must prepare a public participation plan to describe the process to ensure all citizens have reasonable opportunities to be involved in transportation planning, and further describes the means, methods and formats used in providing those opportunities; and

WHEREAS, consistent with the declaration of the above provisions, the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization, in consultation with the Alabama Department of Transportation, has prepared an Amended FY2020-2023 Public Participation Plan (PPP); and

WHEREAS, in meeting requirements of 450.316(a)(1)(ix), the MPO agrees to periodically review the effectiveness of procedures and strategies intended to provide full and open access to all citizens; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 450.316(a)(3) the MPO did provide a n opportunity for public review and comment on the Draft FY2020-2023 Public Participation Plan (PPP) prior to MPO approval during a 45 day period from, held May 9, 2019 to June 24, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Auburn-Opelika MPO has reviewed its public participation procedures, to assure that full and open access to the transportation planning process is provided to all citizens, to maintain consistency with federal and state requirements, and to improve and streamline the public involvement process; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization, that the Amended FY2020-2023 Public Participation Plan (PPP) is hereby adopted.

Adopted this 6th day of November, 2019

Chairman/Vice-Chairman/Acting Chairman, MPO

Date

ATTEST:

Transportation Planner, LRCOG

Date

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1.0 - Introduction

1.1– Purpose

The purpose of this document is to formalize the public participation procedures to be used by the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization (AOMPO) in the development of transportation plans and programs for the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization. It is the goal of the MPO that the transportation planning process be open, accessible, transparent, inclusive and responsive. All MPO and committee meetings are open to the public. All MPO meeting announcements, documents, maps and plans can be viewed at www.lrcog.com.

1.2 – Federal Requirements

The following is a brief summary of the relevant federal laws, regulations, and executive orders that direct state departments of transportation regarding public participation matters. This text was prepared by the Local Transportation Bureau at the Alabama Department of Transportation and modified by the MPO staff to address MPO functions.

Title 23 United States Code (USC) 134 and 135 – 23 USC 134 is the law establishing planning policy, defining MPO organizational structure, and delineating MPO and State responsibilities in the transportation planning process.

Fixing America’s Transportation (FAST) Act – This is the most recent transportation legislation, signed into law by President Obama in December of 2015. This law amends, modifies, and adds to existing 23 USC 134 and 135. The language specific to the participation process is found in 134(i)(6), Participation by Interested Parties.

23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450 – 23 CFR 450 is FHWA/FTA interpretation and codification of 23 USC 134 and 135, providing specific requirements and actions for MPOs and the state implementing agency, the DOT. The applicable language for both is found, respectively, in 450.210(1)(i and others) (“..the state shall..”) and 450.316(1)(vii and others) (“..the MPO shall..”).

Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC 2000d, et seq. - 42 USC 2000d prohibits exclusion from participation in any federal program on the basis of race, color, or national origin. This is the seminal or shaping expression of the law.

23 USC 324 – This is the law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, adding to the landmark significance of 2000d. This requirement is found in 23 CFR 450.334(1).

29 USC 794 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973.) - This is the law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of a disability, and in terms of access to the transportation planning process. ADA/504 is an oft-used reference to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Clean Air Act - A series of acts aimed at reducing smog and air pollution, the most recent of which is the Clean Air Act Extension of 1970, with amendments in 1977 and 1990. The 1990 amendment established the State Implementation Plan (SIP), under which the states are obligated to notify the public of plans for pollutant control and allow opportunities for input into the process.

Executive Order 12898 – This Executive Order requires federal agencies to identify “disproportionately high and adverse human and health environmental effects of its programs on minority populations and low-income populations...” and prohibits actions that would adversely affect a disproportionately high number among these populations. Section 5-5 addresses the public involvement part of the order.

1.3 - Study Area

Metropolitan Planning Organizations are required to encompass two overlapping geographic areas: (1) the current Census Bureau defined urbanized area (UZA) and (2) the area expected to be urbanized over the next 20 years as depicted in the long-range transportation plan for their study area, also known as the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). This 20-year growth area can also be expanded to include “regional economic development and growth forecasting areas.” The current Auburn-Opelika MPA boundaries are illustrated in Appendix 6.1.

2.0 – MPO Organizational Structure

2.1 - Metropolitan Planning Organization Structure

Lee-Russell Council of Governments (LRCOG) manages and maintains the eligibility of the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization (AOMPO) to receive Federal transportation planning funds and administers the Federal transportation planning process in the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Area.

LRCOG personnel prepare and present necessary documents, plans, data and resolutions to the MPO Policy Board, the Technical Advisory Committee and the Citizen Advisory Committee so they may make informed decisions on transportation planning and related matters. LRCOG - previously named the Lee County Area Council of Governments - was formed in 1967 with the task of coordinating planning and development needs associated with the governmental bodies in Lee and Russell County.

2.2 – Policy (Voting) Board

The MPO Policy Board serves as the official policy and decision-making body of the Auburn-Opelika MPO. Through the transportation planning process, the Citizen Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee advise the MPO Policy Board about transportation projects and programs. The MPO Board submits approved projects and programs to the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. MPO Policy Board members are designated by their positions in the City of Auburn, the City of Opelika, Lee County, the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. The MPO Policy Board comprises seven voting members and two non-voting members.

2.3 - Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provides technical assistance and input in the various planning elements involved in the transportation planning process. TAC members are designated by their positions in the City of Auburn, the City of Opelika, Lee County, Auburn University, the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration and LRCOG.

2.4 – Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) serves as a formal means through which citizens may participate in the transportation planning process. The CAC offers opinions and suggestions to the TAC and MPO Policy Board on transportation planning documents and issues. The CAC comprises fifteen members; the City of Auburn, the City of Opelika and Lee County each appoint five representatives to serve on the CAC.

3.0 – Regulations and Requirements

3.1 - Scope of the Planning Process

While the amended 23 USC 134 (amended by FAST Act, Section 1201 and 1202, December 2015; 42 USC 2000d-1, 7401; 23 CFR 450 and 500; 40 CFR 51 and 93) and CFR 450 are the primary regulatory resources, the SAFETEA-LU eight (8) Planning Factors are retained as the Scope of the Planning Process and are the guiding principles providing the framework within which public participation takes place. The factors are shown here as additional information in support of the public participation process:

- (1) Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency;
- (2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- (3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- (4) Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;
- (5) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation and improve quality of life and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- (6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- (7) Promote efficient system management and operation;
- (8) Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- (9) Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- (10) Enhance travel and tourism.

3.2 – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act Provisions

Under Title 23 United States Code (USC) 134, (amended by FAST Act, Section 1201 and 1202, December 2015); 42 USC 2000d-1, 7401; 23 CFR 450 and 500; 40 CFR 51 and 93, the law emphasizes not only the need for involvement by the general public and any interested parties, it required fundamental procedures be developed and followed to insure direct public access to information and the opportunity for input into the process.

- A. **23 USC 134 (i)(5)(B)** calls for a Public Participation Plan (PPP) in the development of an overall Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) or Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and requires for the following, in part:

- (1) Shall be developed in consultation with interested parties.
- (2) Shall provide interested parties with reasonable opportunity to comment.
- (3) Methods must include public meetings at convenient and accessible times and locations.
- (4) Visualization techniques to assist in interpreting plans and actions.
- (5) Public information should be provided electronically via the Internet and available devices and applications to aid in dissemination.
- (6) A plan must be published by the MPO for public review and comment. [ALDOT requires that the Plan be made available both in hard copy and electronic versions.]

B. **23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450** interprets the amended provisions of 23 USC 134 and provides for the following, in part:

- (1) Adequate public notice of activities and time for public review and comment.
- (2) Timely notice and access to information.
- (3) Employment of visualization techniques to describe plans and programs.
- (4) Make information available electronically and on the internet.
- (5) Hold meetings at convenient times and easily accessible venues.
- (6) Consider and respond to public input in a timely fashion.
- (7) Seek out and consider the needs of the traditionally underserved in the community, such as low-income and minority populations.
- (8) Provide additional opportunity for public comment on all plans, and changes to plans, following initial agency and public reviews during development, especially the LRTP and the TIP.
- (9) Coordination with statewide public involvement and consultation processes.
- (10) Periodically review procedures and effectiveness of Plan strategies.
- (11) Provide a summary of comments on the draft and final LRTP and the TIP and include those in the final documents.
- (12) Provide a minimum of forty-five (45) day comment period before finalization of a PPP or an update of an existing Plan.

3.3 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title VI, and Environmental Justice

ADA: The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based solely on disability. It provides protections against discrimination similar to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which is based on race, religion, sex, national origin and other characteristics. ADA essentially defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that limits life activity.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 encourages the participation of people with disabilities in the development of transportation and paratransit plans and services. In accordance with ADA guidelines, all meetings conducted by the MPO will take place in locations which are accessible by persons with mobility limitations or other impairments. Further, each state is required to be compliant with both Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the 1990 Act.

Title VI [Environmental Justice]: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensures that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion. Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, was signed by President Clinton in 1994. It required that programs, policies and activities affecting human health or the environment will identify and avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations. The intent was to ensure that no racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group bears a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from government programs and policies.

3.3.1 - Language Assistance Plan

As required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166, and FTA Circular C 4702.1B, October 2012, the Auburn-Opelika MPO has completed a Four Factor Analysis of the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Area to determine requirements for compliance with the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) provisions. Based on analysis, the MPO has identified a population within the MPA that may require MPO assistance in participating in the planning process. A Language Assistance Plan has been developed as follows:

- The Hispanic population of the Auburn-Opelika MPO is approximately 3% of total population with only 1.5% of this population not speaking English very well, thereby requiring the development of a Language Assistance Plan.
- The MPO will provide language assistance services if needed by contacting the Foreign Language Department at Auburn University. The contact is Dr. Ted McVay at 334-844-6356.
- Notice of the availability of language assistance to LEP persons is provided by the Auburn-Opelika MPO.
- The MPO monitors, evaluates and updates the Plan annually through the update of the PPP and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Training on MPO staff to provide language assistance is done by ALDOT.

The MPO periodically reviews the above steps to ensure that inadvertent discrimination on the basis of national origin is not occurring.

In addition to the above actions, the MPO may provide the following if needed:

- Notice of MPO meetings and hearings in the secondary language Spanish.
- Translation services for meetings or hearing on request, subject to a notice of 5 working days
- Translation services, verbal only, of planning documents subject to notice of 5 working days

3.4 - Vision Statement

It is the vision of the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization (AOMPO) to have a community that understands and actively participates in the transportation planning process.

3.5 - MPO PPP Goals

As a continuing effort by the MPO to provide public access and the means by which to engage in the planning process, the MPO has established the following goals:

- (1) An Open Process – To have an open process that encourages early and continued public participation.
- (2) Easy Information Access – To provide complete and timely information regarding plans, programs, procedures, policies and technical data produced or used during the planning process to the general public and the media.
- (3) Notice of Activities – To provide timely and adequate public notice of hearings, meetings, reviews and availability of documents.
- (4) Public Input and Organizational Response – To demonstrate consideration and recognition of public input and comments and to provide appropriate responses to public input.
- (5) An Inclusive Process – To encourage participation in the planning process by traditionally under represented segments of the community; low-income groups, minorities, persons with disabilities, and the elderly; and to consider the needs of these groups when developing programs, projects or plans.

3.6 - MPO PPP Strategies

These procedures have been developed to seek out a combination of outreach, inclusion, and engagement of the public in the transportation planning process. The AOMPO, in an effort to develop and implement a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process, will

continually pursue an innovative and effective Public Participation Plan.

3.6.1 – Meetings, Times, & Locations

All AOMPO meetings are open to the public, and all material to be brought before the MPO is available for public inspection and review upon request. Fees may be charged for photocopies. Meetings are held quarterly in the Conference Room of the Lee-Russell Council of Governments in Opelika, AL. On those months when the AOMPO does meet, the standard meeting days are the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00A (Citizen Advisory Committee) and 1:30P (Technical Advisory Committee) and the Wednesday following the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00A (Policy Board).

3.6.2 – Public Notice

Prior to MPO consideration for approval, the development process and the draft of the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), a new or formally amended Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), a new or formally amended Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), Public Participation Plan (PPP), Bicycle Pedestrian Plan, and, if and when appropriate, a new Air Quality Conformity Report, will be advertised for public review, comment, and/or input in a Lee County general circulation newspaper. This notification procedure will also apply to any new or substantially revised federal transportation project proposed for implementation in the study area and anticipated to have significant impact. The notice will briefly describe the proposed action, and where more detailed information can be obtained. The intent of this procedure is to provide a means for involvement and input from all interested parties at the earliest possible time prior to MPO decisions or action. Therefore, public notice of the proposed meeting or action will be made as soon as possible, but in no event less than one week prior to the date the MPO is scheduled to act on the proposal. The same newspaper notice or press release (or a more user-friendly version of the same) will be posted in the Lee County Courthouse, Auburn City Hall, Opelika City Hall, the Lee-Russell Council of Governments, libraries, and public housing offices within the study area.

3.6.3 – Availability of Documents for Public Review

The public notices described above will specify that a more detailed explanation of the proposed action can be obtained from the LRCOG Transportation Planning staff and will include the office mailing address and phone number. When entire documents are involved (i.e., TIP, UPWP, or LRTP, etc.), the notice will also state that the document can be reviewed at all local libraries, public housing offices, Lee-Russell Council of Governments, and on the LRCOG website. The project documentation available at each site will include comment forms with instructions on how to contact LRCOG for additional information and where to submit written comments. In addition, the documents will contain a checklist where the public can place a check that they have reviewed the document without having to leave their name.

3.6.4 – Traditionally Underserved Consideration

The MPO seeks out and considers the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing

transportation systems, i.e. low income and minority households by first identifying those areas that have high populations of low income and minorities based on census block data. These areas are targeted and canvassed with public notices, copies of documents for review, and comment forms at places frequented by the public such as, the libraries, town halls, public housing board offices, public transit facilities and the like. All MPO committee meetings are open to the public and invitations are posted at the public housing board offices, town halls and libraries. In addition, MPO staff is available to do presentations on the Transportation Planning Process for advocacy groups in low income and minority populated areas.

3.6.5 – Visualization

Provisions of the FAST Act require that the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) include visualization techniques to describe projects. To meet this requirement the LRTP and TIP include maps of the road projects that are identified as part of the Mobile Area Transportation Study. The MPO also utilizes visualization tools such as large paper maps and poster boards and PowerPoint presentations in the various presentations to the community. All documents developed by the MPO are posted on the internet at <http://www.lrcog.com/mpo.html>

3.6.6 – Other Means of Dissemination

MPO staff will utilize other available media (including public service announcements, billboards, and signs on public transportation vehicles) to encourage early and continuous involvement of citizens in the planning process and in the promotion of ongoing programs. The AOMPO also maintains a home page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.lrcog.com/mpo.html>. MPO staff will maintain mailing lists, including areas of interest if available. Upon request, notification of document availability, public hearings or meetings, or pending MPO action will be mailed to individuals who have indicated interest in related matters and have provided a current mailing address within the study area. Community involvement efforts will be used to help establish new contacts to add to the mailing list.

3.6.7 – Resolution of Public Input

All comments received on draft plans or proposals, whether submitted in writing or orally to MPO staff independently or at public meetings or hearings, will be documented and made available to the MPO prior to any action being taken on the proposal. All relevant comments and their responses will be included in the final plan/proposal adopted by the MPO. All responses to public comments will be made in a timely manner.

3.6.8 – Accommodations of Physically Challenged

Access to meetings or information will be available to physically challenged persons by notifying the MPO staff at least 48 hours prior to the meeting date or date the information is desired so that adequate time is available to complete any special arrangements necessary to accommodate the individual's physical challenge.

3.6.9 – Revised Proposals

Should any draft plans or proposals be substantially modified after being advertised for public comment, either due to such comment or otherwise, the public notice cycle will be repeated and the new proposal will be made available for public comment.

3.7 - Public Participation Strategies for Transportation Planning Documents

This section discusses the public participation process, procedures for preparation and strategies for dissemination of the following planning documents:

3.7.1 - Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP):

The UPWP is a primary administrative budget document in the required planning document hierarchy, which includes the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and others. The UPWP document includes those activities and funding necessary to develop and produce the other plans.

It outlines the task activities for the transportation planning program for the upcoming fiscal year, such as Administration, Data Collection and Management, UPWP, Public Involvement, Transportation Systems (LRTP, TIP, Bicycle and Pedestrian) and so on. Within each task and sub-task area, components are identified as Objective(s), Previous Work, Proposed Work, Products/Deliverables, Staffing, Schedule/Timeline and Financial Responsibility. Planning Funds (PL) are allocated to the separate tasks, including those for Public Involvement. The activities under the Public Involvement task include building or preparing the PPP, performing community outreach, educating the public on the involvement process and interacting with the public for the MPO. Other procedural steps include:

- All MPO meetings are open to the public. In addition, local print and radio media contacts who have expressed interest in the MPO are included on the MPO e-mail list. However, at this time under current legislation and guidelines, public involvement, review or comment are not required for the UPWP document.
- After the Draft is reviewed and approved by the MPO, it is submitted to ALDOT, FHWA and FTA for comments and suggestions.
- After comments have been received from ALDOT, FHWA and FTA, the MPO reviews and adopts the Final UPWP which is then submitted to ALDOT.
- The UPWP, as with all other MPO documents, is available at: www.Ircog.com.

3.7.2 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP):

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) extends transportation analysis and decision making in the Study Area out to at least a twenty (20) year horizon. The LRTP is updated every five years (four years if in non-conformity for Air Quality) and serves as a conduit for public input on a broad range of

transportation issues. The LRTP considers all modes of transportation from a regional perspective. The following actions will be undertaken to ensure that the public has various opportunities to participate in and review and comment on the LRTP and its development process:

- At least one open public meeting will be advertised and held with MPO staff support to receive public comments on the draft document.
- A display ad announcement of the public meeting, its date, location and time along with information on other opportunities for public review and comment on the draft document will be published at the beginning of the fourteen (14) day review period in the local newspaper with the largest circulation.
- Meeting announcements and details will be posted on the MPO web page at www.lrcog.com.
- The draft document will be available on-line or in the LRCOG lobby for public review and comment for fourteen (14) days after the MPO adopts the Draft document.
- Special outreach within the Study Area will include hand delivered announcements of public review and comment opportunities to housing authorities and public libraries.
- Comment forms will accompany all copies of the draft document and can be submitted at any time during the 14 day review period by mail, dropped off in the LRCOG lobby or via email to the MPO.
- All public comments on the LRTP will be summarized in a report and provided to the MPO at its regular meeting for review, consideration and response if necessary. Copies of all comments will be included in the appendices of the Final LRTP.
- The MPO will consult with local governments, federal and state agencies, and other officials responsible for other planning activities in the MPO Study Area.
- Copies of documents may be obtained by contacting: The Transportation Planner at LRCOG, 2207 Gateway Drive, Opelika, AL 36801, calling (334)749-5264 x214, Fax (334)749-6582, TDD (800) 548-2547 or visiting www.lrcog.com/mpo.html.

3.7.3 - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is four (4) year short range subset of the LRTP that is the funded program of projects in the Auburn-Opelika MPO and includes those federal-aid projects funded under Surface Transportation (ST), Bridges, Highway Safety, Transit and Transportation Alternatives (TA; formerly Enhancements) programs. Other state and federal funding sources and programs may contribute to transportation development in the MPO area are included in the TIP project lists, which include specific project descriptions, level of completion, funding by phase, and funding sources. The following actions will be undertaken to insure public opportunities for review and comment:

- A display ad announcement of the public comment period, its date, location and time along with information on other opportunities for public review and comment on the draft document will

be published at the beginning of the fourteen (14) day review period in the local newspaper with the largest circulation.

- Public comment announcements and details will be posted on the MPO web page at www.lrcog.com.
- The draft document will be available on-line or in the LRCOG lobby for public review and comment for fourteen (14) days after the MPO adopts the Draft document.
- Special outreach within the Study Area will include hand delivered announcements of public review and comment opportunities to housing authorities and public libraries.
- Comment forms will accompany all copies of the draft document and can be submitted at any time during the 14 day review period by mail, dropped off in the LRCOG lobby or via email to the MPO.
- All public comments on the LRTP will be summarized in a report and provided to the MPO at its regular meeting for review, consideration and response if necessary. Copies of all comments will be included in the appendices of the Final LRTP.
- The MPO will consult with local governments, federal and state agencies, and other officials responsible for other planning activities in the MPO Study Area.
- Copies of documents may be obtained by contacting: The Transportation Planner at LRCOG, 2207 Gateway Drive, Opelika, AL 36801, calling (334)749-5264 x214, Fax (334)749-6582, TDD (800) 548-2547 or visiting www.lrcog.com/mpo.html.

3.7.4 - Public Participation Plan (PPP):

Under Section 3.1 the PPP is required under 23 USC 134 (amended by FAST Act Section 1201 and 1202, December 2015); 42 USC 2000d-1, 7401; 23 CFR 450 and 500; 40 CFR 51 and 93, and then as interpreted in the regulations of 23 CFR 450. Within 450.316 are the specifics for the Plan and they include some or all of the following items that are necessary to ensuring full compliance of the law and participation of the citizens of the Auburn-Opelika MPO MPA.

FHWA, with the concurrence of ALDOT, requires that the Auburn-Opelika MPO monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement activities in the study area "...to ensure a full and open participation process." [23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(X)]. Through periodic review and adjustment, it is possible to improve or add new public participation efforts to the MPO program and discontinue efforts that are ineffective.

The Plan outlines activities for informing the public and providing opportunities for public review and comment on the transportation planning process and or proposed transportation improvement projects. Additionally, for Transportation Management Areas (TMA's) (over 200,000 in population), the Congestion Management Process and the Air Quality Conformity Report (for TMA's in non-attainment for air quality) are required. The Auburn-Opelika MPO is in attainment for air quality and is concerned with maintaining and/or updating the UPWP, LRTP, TIP, the Bicycle/Ped Plan and the PPP. Accordingly,

the following actions will take place in preparation of the PPP update:

- The Public Participation Plan (PPP) will be updated at least every four (4) years, unless otherwise directed by ALDOT. The MPO may adjust or amend the PPP as desired, with copies submitted for review to ALDOT, who will make further distribution to FHWA, FTA, and other agencies.
- The PPP will be prepared by the MPO with input from the CAC, MPO, ALDOT, the general public, local, state and federal agencies and interested parties as provided in 23 CFR 450.316(a).
- Distribution of written information to the public and CAC is a requisite part of 316(a). The Draft PPP will be made available for public review and comment for a minimum of forty five (45) days prior to MPO consideration for approval of the Final PPP.
- The Draft PPP must be reviewed and approved by ALDOT, FHWA and FTA.
- A display ad announcement of the public comment period, its date, location and time along with information on other opportunities for public review and comment on the Draft PPP will be published at the beginning of the 45-day review period in the local newspaper with the largest circulation.
- Public comment announcements and details will be posted on the MPO web page at www.lrcog.com.
- The Draft PPP will be available on-line or in the LRCOG lobby for public review and comment for forty-five (45) days after the MPO adopts the Draft document.
- Special outreach within the Study Area will include hand delivered announcements of public review and comment opportunities to local housing authorities and libraries.
- Comment forms will accompany all copies of the Draft PPP and can be submitted at any time during the 45 day review period by mail, dropped off in the LRCOG lobby or via email to the MPO.
- All public comments on the Draft PPP will be summarized in a report and provided to the MPO at its regular meeting for review, consideration and response if necessary. Copies of all comments will be included in the appendices of the Final PPP.
- Copies of documents may be obtained by contacting: The Transportation Planner at LRCOG, 2207 Gateway Drive, Opelika, AL 36801, calling (334)749-5264 x214, Fax (334)749-6582, TDD (800)548-2547 or visiting www.lrcog.com/mpo.html.

3.7.5 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:

Bicycle and pedestrian plans and planning components have been required in the LRTP and the TIP documents since the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1992. Subsequent

legislation, the Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) passed in 2005, MAP-21 passed in 2012, and carried forward to the FAST Act passed in 2015, also included requirements for a bicycle pedestrian plan. Alabama MPOs were instructed to prepare Bicycle Pedestrian Plans in 2009 and again in 2010 pursuant to USDOT and FHWA directives.

The following activities will be undertaken to provide public review and comment opportunities during the development and update of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:

- The Auburn-Opelika Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (BPP) will be updated at the discretion of the MPO and as directed by ALDOT. The MPO may adjust or amend the Plan as desired, with copies submitted for review to ALDOT, who will make further distribution to FHWA, FTA, and other agencies.
- The BPP will be prepared by the MPO with input from existing municipal and county Bike and Ped committees, the CAC, MPO, the general public and interested parties as provided in 23 CFR 450.316(a).
- A display ad announcement of the public comment period, its date, location and time along with information on other opportunities for public review and comment on the draft document will be published at the beginning of the fourteen (14) day review period in the local newspaper with the largest circulation.
- Public comment announcements and details will be posted on the MPO web page at www.lrcog.com.
- The draft document will be available on-line or in the LRCOG lobby for public review and comment for fourteen (14) days after the MPO adopts the Draft document.
- Special outreach within the Study Area will include hand delivered announcements of public review and comment opportunities to housing authorities and public libraries.
- Comment forms will accompany all copies of the draft document and can be submitted at any time during the 14 day review period by mail, dropped off in the LRCOG lobby or via email to the MPO.
- All public comments on the LRTP will be summarized in a report and provided to the MPO at its regular meeting for review, consideration and response if necessary. Copies of all comments will be included in the appendices of the Final BPP.
- The MPO will consult with local governments, federal and state agencies, and other officials responsible for other planning activities in the MPO Study Area.
- Copies of documents may be obtained by contacting: The Transportation Planner at LRCOG, 2207 Gateway Drive, Opelika, AL 36801, calling (334)749-5264 x214, Fax (334)749-6582, TDD (800) 548-2547 or visiting www.lrcog.com/mpo.html.

3.7.6 - Air Quality Conformity Amendments or Report

If, after Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rulemaking, the Auburn-Opelika urban area is found to be in non-conformity for ground level ozone (O₃), or any other pollutant, the Auburn-Opelika MPO will provide public review and comment opportunities necessary in documenting a process for attaining Air Quality Conformity.

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone are currently .70/.070 (parts per billion/million) depending on reporting method. As a part of the Statewide Implementation Plan (SIP), the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) establishes pollutant “budgets”. Should a new lower threshold range require the Auburn-Opelika MPO to develop an Air Quality Conformity Report (ACR), it would do so using ADEM “budgets” to prepare “estimates” utilizing MOVES2014b software.

If it becomes necessary to amend the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or to develop an ACR as a result of the Auburn-Opelika MPO being in non-compliance with NAAQS, the following activities will be undertaken to provide opportunities for public review and comment:

- A display ad announcement of the public comment period, its date, location and time along with information on other opportunities for public review and comment on the draft document will be published at the beginning of the fourteen (14) day review period in the local newspaper with the largest circulation.
- Public comment announcements and details will be posted on the MPO web page at www.lrcog.com.
- The draft document will be available on-line or in the LRCOG lobby for public review and comment for fourteen (14) days after the MPO adopts the Draft document.
- Special outreach within the Study Area will include hand delivered announcements of public review and comment opportunities to housing authorities and public libraries.
- Comment forms will accompany all copies of the draft document and can be submitted at any time during the 14 day review period by mail, dropped off in the LRCOG lobby or via email to the MPO.
- All public comments on the LRTP will be summarized in a report and provided to the MPO at its regular meeting for review, consideration and response if necessary. Copies of all comments will be included in the appendices of the Final LRTP.
- The MPO will consult with local governments, federal and state agencies, and other officials responsible for other planning activities in the MPO Study Area.
- Copies of documents may be obtained by contacting: The Transportation Planner at LRCOG, 2207 Gateway Drive, Opelika, AL 36801, calling (334)749-5264 x214, Fax (334)749-6582, TDD (800) 548-2547 or visiting www.lrcog.com/mpo.html.

3.8 - Amendment Process – LRTP, TIP, and Other Operations Plans

Amendments to formal planning documents containing project listings and funding will be carried out pursuant to sections of Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450, applicable to road and highway projects under various Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding programs and those transportation projects and funding actions under Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs.

While governing regulations are specific to the Long Range Transportation Plan (Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Regional Transportation Plan), the short range component of the Long Range, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the process is extended in Alabama to those plans with projects and funding presented in tabular or listed format, to include the Congestion Management Plan (CMP), the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and the amended project listings of the Long Range and TIP documents under the Air Quality Conformity Process.

The amendment process involves both a formal approval process and also a system for processing more modest or minor adjustments to TIP projects (23 CFR 450.104). FHWA – Alabama Division and ALDOT have agreed that a formal TIP amendment is required for a *highway-oriented* project when one or more of the following criteria are met:

- The change adds a new individual project
- The change adversely impacts fiscal constraint
- The change results in major scope changes
- The change deletes an individually listed project from the TIP
- The change results in a cost increase of \$1,000,000

When a change is made that meets one of these criteria, the change must be processed as an amendment, subject to approval of this procedure by the MPO Policy Board. FAST Act regulations include a provision for an amendment which includes the following definition:

Amendment means a revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that involves a major change to a project included in a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP, including the addition or deletion of a project or a 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 or changing the number of stations in the case of fixed guideway transit projects). 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 and a re-demonstration of fiscal constraint. If an amendment involves “non-exempt” projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas, a conformity determination is required.

A change that does not meet any of these criteria may be processed as an *administrative modification*, subject to approval of this procedure by the MPO Policy Board. FAST Act regulations include a provision for an *administrative modification* which includes the following definition:

Administrative modification means a minor revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), or

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) 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. An administrative modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in non-attainment and maintenance areas).

For the FY2020-2023 TIP, any increase or decrease of \$1,000,000 (\$5,000,000 for Transportation Management Areas) requires an amendment to the TIP. That change will be based on the value of the last amendment, not administrative modification, and the MPO will be required to do a resolution when the total of those costs increases reaches \$1,000,000 or \$5,000,000. Regarding Level of Effort (LVEO) projects, a resolution is only required when the entire LVEO category increases by 20%.

4.0 – Auburn-Opelika MPO Staff

4.1 - Auburn-Opelika Area MPO Staff

The MPO staff consists of one (1) transportation planner who also provides geographic information system (GIS) support; the local area public transit system is administered by a staff of four (4). The MPO transportation planner handles all of the daily MPO work, organizes and conducts all of the meetings for the MPO and its associated committees, and prepares all MPO documents. The MPO does not have a designated public information officer so the MPO transportation planner also serves in that role as well. The following activities include but are not limited to the public participation activities conducted by the MPO staff.

- Prepare the Public Participation Plan
- Track public participation in the MPO process
- Maintain MPO public participation records
- Maintain MPO mail/email databases for committee members; media contacts; agencies that work with low-income, minorities, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens; and the general public (by request)
- Conduct quarterly MPO committee meetings, including the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Conduct MPO public meetings as needed and related to documents and programs
- Ensure MPO meetings follow the bylaws, Public Participation Plan strategies, and ADA requirements
- Prepare responses to public input
- Publish MPO documents (paper and Internet)
- Coordinates maintenance of the MPO webpage
- Make public presentations regarding the MPO process
- Prepare news releases
- Prepare legal ads
- Coordinate MPO public participation activities with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)

4.2 - Staff Meeting and Contact Information

On those months when the Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization (AOMPO) meets, the standard meeting days are the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00A (Citizen Advisory Committee) and 1:30P (Technical Advisory Committee) and the Wednesday following the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00A (Policy Board). Currently, all Auburn-Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization (AOMPO) meetings are held in the Conference Room of the Lee-Russell Council of Governments in Opelika, Alabama.

Address:

Lee-Russell Council of Governments
2207 Gateway Drive
Opelika, AL 36801
www.lrcog.com

Transportation Planner Contact Information:

Mr. Daniel Wyatt, Transportation Planner / GIS Coordinator
Lee-Russell Council of Governments
2207 Gateway Drive
Opelika, AL 36801
(334)749-5264 x214
(334)749-6582 Fax
dwyatt@lrcog.com

All MPO meetings are open to the public. Committee members are notified by mail or email at least one (1) week before the meeting date.

Future dates and times are announced at the MPO and advisory committee meetings and listed on the LRCOG web page at: www.lrcog.com. Announcements and notices will include a number to call for citizens requiring special accommodations.

Meetings must conform to the requirements of the Alabama Open Meetings Act 2005-40 and are open to the public. All meetings are subject to the public access and involvement requirement provisions of Alabama Code 36-25A-1.

5.0 – Performance Measurement Process

5.1 - Livability Principals and Indicators

Increasingly, federal and state agencies are using Performance Measures as a way of ensuring greater accountability for the expenditure of public funds in an ever growing number of programs and activities across a variety of disciplines. Within the transportation sector and the planning processes associated with transportation infrastructure development, ALDOT has adopted the Livability Principles and Indicators as a sustainability measurement against future actions.

The Livability Principals and Indicators are described in the narrative of each draft and final version of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Principals shown cannot be changed. However, MPO's are encouraged to employ or adapt those Indicators they feel best reflect their local conditions and needs and that can be easily tracked over time and presented in tables, charts or maps within the following documents:

- (1) Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- (2) Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
- (3) Public Participation Plan (PPP)
- (4) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

All planning tasks must be measured against these Livability Principles:

1. *Provide more transportation choices*
2. *Promote equitable, affordable housing*
3. *Enhance economic competitiveness*
4. *Support existing communities*
5. *Coordinate policies and leverage investment*
6. *Value communities and neighborhoods*

As a measure of sustainability of these principles, the MPO has provided the following Livability Indicators in Appendix A:

1. *Percent of jobs and housing located within one-half (1/2) mile of transit service*
2. *Monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months*
3. *Percent of vehicles available per occupied housing unit*
4. *Percent of workforce living within a thirty (30) minute or less commute from primary job centers*
5. *Percent of population employed in production, transportation and material moving*
6. *Percent of industry engaged in transportation and warehousing; utilities*
7. *Percent of FY2012-FY2015 MPO transportation projects where more than one federal funding source is utilized*
8. *Work commute modal choice by percent*

5.2 - Performance Evaluation

The MPO listed some techniques to evaluate the effectiveness of this plan. These techniques along with their evaluation criteria, performance goals, and methods indicate how the MPO will give all citizens the opportunity to participate in the AOMPO transportation planning process. The following procedures will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the methods and goals listed in this document:

Public Participation Techniques	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal	Methods to Meet Goals
Public Participation	Attendance, Calls, and Comments	N/ A	Update Every 4 Years to Improve Strategies and Methods
Advisory Committees	Attendance	Maintain an Average of 50% or More	Generate Consistent Meeting Dates and Send Out Materials Before Meetings
MPO Website	Total Number of Inquiries (calls, letters, etc.)	Number of Site Visits Per Month	Continue to Update and Maintain Listings
Public Hearings (Open Houses, Stakeholder Meetings, etc.)	Attendance, Calls, and Comments	Achieve a Minimum Attendance of 10 Citizens at Each Public Hearing	Schedule Meetings at Convenient Times/Locations and Increase Awareness of Meetings
Mailing and Address Lists	Attendance, Calls, and Comments	Ensure all Potential Stakeholders are Included	Continue to Update and Maintain Listings
Data/Fact Sheets and Surveys	Attendance, Calls, and Comments	N/A	Encourage Responses and Comments
Surveys	Number of Responses	5% Response Rate of the Total Sample	Encourage Responses and Comments
Public Relations	Number of Local and Regional Meetings and Events Attended	N/ A	Represent the MPO at All Related Transportation Events and Meetings
Display Ads	Attendance, Calls, and Comments	Compare Posted Locations Vs. Attendance	Look for Better Locations to Post Ads and Notices at Population Centers

6.0 - Appendices

6.1 Livability Indicators

As a measure of sustainability and in direct relation to the **Livability Principles** established in section 5.2, the Auburn-Opelika MPO has provided the following **Livability Indicators** for the MPO's Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), also known as the MPO Study Area

1. *Percent of jobs and housing located within one-half (1/2) mile of transit service:*

Lee-Russell Public Transit provides demand response service to the entire MPA, therefore the percent of jobs and housing located within ½ mile of transit service is 100%.

Related Livability Principle: 1

Geographic Extent: Auburn-Opelika MPO Metropolitan Planning Area

Source: Auburn-Opelika MPO

2. *Monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months:*

Past 12 Month's HH Income	Estimate	Error
Less than \$20,000	16.0%	+/-4.3
Less than 20 percent	1.2%	+/-1.2
20 to 29 percent	1.1%	+/-1.1
30 percent or more	13.6%	+/-4.0
\$20,000 to \$34,999	17.8%	+/-5.5
Less than 20 percent	4.9%	+/-2.0
20 to 29 percent	3.6%	+/-1.7
30 percent or more	9.2%	+/-4.5
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10.7%	+/-3.4
Less than 20 percent	4.4%	+/-2.0
20 to 29 percent	3.7%	+/-2.2
30 percent or more	2.6%	+/-1.5
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17.1%	+/-3.8
Less than 20 percent	10.2%	+/-3.1
20 to 29 percent	5.7%	+/-2.0
30 percent or more	1.2%	+/-0.9
\$75,000 or more	34.5%	+/-5.7
Less than 20 percent	30.1%	+/-5.3
20 to 29 percent	3.9%	+/-2.0
30 percent or more	0.6%	+/-0.8
Zero or negative income	2.4%	+/-1.6
No cash rent	1.5%	+/-0.7

Related Livability Principle: 2

Geographic Extent: Auburn-Opelika, AL Metro Area

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Dataset: 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

3. Percent of vehicles available per occupied housing unit:

Vehicles Per Occupied Housing Unit	Percent	Error
No vehicles available	2.7%	+/-1.1
1 vehicle available	31.6%	+/-3.5
2 vehicles available	40.9%	+/-3.5
3 or more vehicles available	24.9%	+/-3.2

Related Livability Principle: 3

Geographic Extent: Auburn-Opelika, AL Metro Area

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Dataset: 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

4. Percent of workforce living within a thirty (30) minute or less commute from primary job centers:

Due to the size of the Auburn-Opelika MPO's MPA, 100% of the MPA workforce lives within a 30-minute commute of the primary job centers, which are Auburn University and East Alabama Medical Center.

Related Livability Principle: 4

Geographic Extent: Auburn-Opelika MPO Metropolitan Planning Area

Source: Auburn-Opelika MPO and Reference USA

5. Percent of population employed in production, transportation and material moving:

Percent	Error
11.0%	+/-2.4

Related Livability Principle: 5

Geographic Extent: Auburn-Opelika, AL Metro Area

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Dataset: 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

6. Percent of industry engaged in transportation and warehousing; utilities:

Percent	Error
4.2%	+/-1.7

Related Livability Principle: 6

Geographic Extent: Auburn-Opelika, AL Metro Area

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Dataset: 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

7. Percent of FY2012-FY2015 MPO transportation projects (Planned) where more than one federal funding source is utilized:

Total Projects	Projects with >1 Fed Funding Source	Percent of Projects with >1 Fed Funding Source
113	3	2.6%

Related Livability Principle: 7

Geographic Extent: Auburn-Opelika MPO Metropolitan Planning Area

Source: Alabama Department of Transportation

8. Work commute modal choice by percent:

Work Commute Modal Choice	Percent	Error
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	82.1%	+/-3.7
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	11.7%	+/-3.4
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.1%	+/-0.2
Walked	2.6%	+/-1.3
Other means	1.4%	+/-0.8
Worked at home	2.0%	+/-0.7

Related Livability Principle: 8

Geographic Extent: Auburn-Opelika, AL Metro Area

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Dataset: 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Auburn-Opelika MPO - Urbanized Area & Planning Area

