

2016

Public Involvement Plan



Lee and Russell County
Rural Planning
Organization

Lee and Russell Counties Rural Planning Organization

Public Involvement Plan

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**LEE AND RUSSELL COUNTY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN VISION STATEMENT**

IT IS THE VISION OF THE LEE AND RUSSELL COUNTY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION TO HAVE A COMMUNITY THAT UNDERSTANDS AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATES IN THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS.



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Public Involvement Plan is to ensure that the transportation planning process encourages active public participation. The Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization (RPO) is the official consultation effort by the Alabama Department of Transportation in the rural areas of Lee and Russell County. The Public Involvement Plan describes the strategies that will guide public involvement in the transportation planning process.

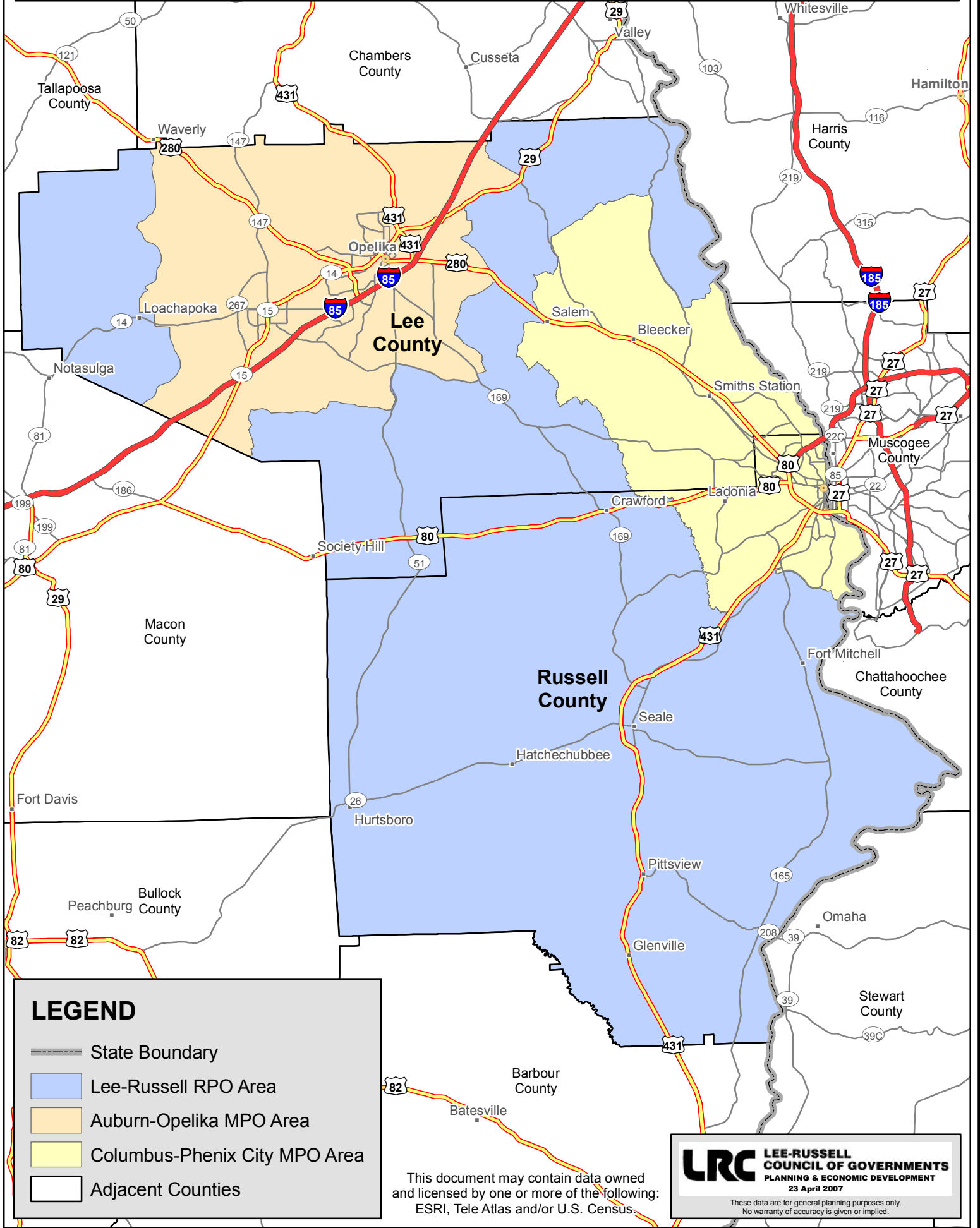
The Lee and Russell County RPO study area includes the areas of Lee and Russell County that are not served by the Auburn Opelika Metropolitan Planning Organization or the Columbus-Phenix City Metropolitan Planning Organization. The towns of Loachapoka and Hurtsboro, as well as the communities of Beauregard, Beulah, Crawford, Cottonton, Fort Mitchell, Marvyn, Seale, and Pittsview in unincorporated areas of Lee and Russell counties are served by the RPO.

Approximately 72,000 people live within the RPO study area. According to the American Community Survey Estimates, people in the rural areas of Lee and Russell County have an older median age and a higher percentage of individuals with disabilities than people residing in urban areas.

Public participation was sought during the development of the 2016 Public Involvement Plan. A draft of the plan was e-mailed to elected officials, county engineers, public transit directors, mobility managers, and citizens who had participated in previous RPO meetings and open houses. The draft plan was placed on the LRCOG website and the RPO Facebook page from April 8, 2016 to May 31, 2016. The draft plan was distributed for approval at RPO meetings in both Lee and Russell County in July. The meetings were open to the public and advertised in the local newspapers, on the LRCOG website, and on social media.



Lee-Russell Rural Planning Organization Area



LEGEND

- State Boundary
- Lee-Russell RPO Area
- Auburn-Opelika MPO Area
- Columbus-Phenix City MPO Area
- Adjacent Counties

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LRC LEE-RUSSELL
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PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
23 April 2007

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PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS

The following goals shall guide the public involvement process for the Lee and Russell County RPO:

- 1.** Maintain an open planning process that encourages early and continued public participation.
- 2.** Provide complete and timely information regarding the plans, programs, procedures, policies, and technical data produced or used during the planning process to interested parties and the general public.
- 3.** Provide timely and adequate public notice of hearings, meetings, open houses, document reviews, and document availability via print media, social media and internet presence.
- 4.** Welcome public involvement and interest and provide timely and appropriate responses to comments and concerns.
- 5.** Encourage participation by low-income groups, minorities, persons with disabilities, and the elderly and consider the needs of these groups when developing programs and plans.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS

The following strategies shall be employed to achieve the goals of the Public Involvement Plan:

Strategy	Goals Addressed
A. All meetings of the Lee and Russell County Planning Organization will be open to the public and will provide citizens with an opportunity to participate in the planning process.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
B. The Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization will provide advance notice for all meetings, forums, and open houses. Notices will include the date, time, and location of the meeting as well as the purpose for the meeting. Notices will be provided to local media and groups that address the needs of low-income groups, minorities, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens. Notices will request that interested individuals, who need special accommodations, notify the Lee-Russell Council of Governments at least two days prior to the date of the meeting so necessary arrangements can be made.	1, 3, 5
C. The Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization will follow all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act when holding meetings, forums, and open houses.	1, 5
D. The Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization will maintain a record of public involvement. The record will document attendance at all public involvement activities.	1, 2, 4
E. Upon request, the Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization will make available to the general public and government agencies all documents and appropriate technical data produced for the transportation planning process.	2, 4
F. The Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization will encourage the publication of news articles on the transportation planning process.	1, 2, 4

Strategy	Goals Addressed
G. The Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization will maintain an on-line and social media presence.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
H. The staff of the Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization will be available for speaking engagements concerning the transportation planning process.	1, 2, 4
I. The Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization will review the Public Involvement Plan every 5 years.	1, 2, 3, 4
J. The Lee and Russell County Rural Planning Organization will publish the Public Involvement Plan and any amendments to the plan on the internet and via social media. The public will be given at least a 45-day period to provide written comments prior to plan approval.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The following measures may be used by RPO staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Involvement Plan in achieving its goals:

- 1.** Total attendance at meetings, open houses, and forums.
- 2.** Number of new attendees at meetings, open houses, and forums.
- 3.** Number of print media meeting notices published.
- 4.** Number of on-line and social media meeting notices published.
- 5.** Number of questions and/or complaints regarding the transportation planning process received.
- 6.** Number of requests for information received in-person, by telephone, by mail, by e-mail.
- 7.** Number of documents available on line or via social media.
- 8.** Number of newspaper articles published on the transportation planning process in local newspapers.
- 9.** Number of speeches or presentations to the community provided by the staff of the RPO.