



# METROS

## Quarterly

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

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## AMPO Helps MPOs Address Integrated Transportation-Land Use Planning Needs

### Introduction

On May 16 and 17, staff members of 13 MPOs from across the country participated in AMPO's pilot workshop on "Integrated Transportation-Land Use Planning." Hosted by the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), this interactive workshop focused on helping participating MPOs better understand options and opportunities for more effectively addressing the transportation-land use connection in their own regions. A grant from the Federal Highway Administration's Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) Program provided the primary funding for the workshop.

### Background

AMPO developed the workshop in response to MPOs' continuing interests in better understanding approaches for more effectively integrating transportation and land use planning. It built upon AMPO's 2004 report on *Noteworthy MPO Practices in Transportation-Land Use Planning Integration* (available at [www.ampo.org](http://www.ampo.org)). That report included in-depth case studies of projects and initiatives in which a variety of MPOs, large and small, had successfully addressed land use issues and planning within the metropolitan transportation planning process. Key staff from these MPOs participated extensively in case study development by helping describe and articulate the "nuts and bolts" of the processes they used to achieve their success and providing "do's and don'ts" to inform other MPOs that may be initiating similar processes.

### The Workshop

The workshop was designed to be highly interactive and results-oriented. As MPOs have limited resources and staff time for training, AMPO wanted to be sure that participants left the event with practical and immediately applicable information and ideas so their time investment in the workshop was cost-effective.

The agenda was built around a "facilitated thinking" framework, with small group exercises and coaching from the facilitators. There were three main elements:

- Presentations and discussions with each of the case study MPO staffers on their "success stories;"
- A facilitated small group exercise on "diagnosing" the current state of integrated transportation-land use planning in each participant's MPO; and
- A facilitated small group exercise to identify specific strategic steps and/or actions each participant's MPO could take to initiate or further transportation-land use planning integration in their metropolitan area.



Workshop attendees participated in hands-on work sessions where they worked with facilitators and their peers to diagnose their regional transportation and land use challenges and identify strategies and methods to address them.

Each small group exercise was followed by a full group discussion to share ideas, issues and perspectives.

After making their initial presentations to the full group, the speakers assumed facilitator and coach roles for the small group tabletop exercises. This enabled workshop participants to receive "real world" advice for initiating or enhancing efforts at their own MPOs.

Most participants were able to develop strategic frameworks for initiating or enhancing their integrated transportation-land use planning efforts upon leaving the workshop.

Some of the key topics discussed by workshop participants included effective engagement of the public and elected officials, melding of technical and non-technical approaches and tools, addressing jurisdictional and institutional issues, and issues specific to small MPOs, who tend to face special obstacles to pursuing innovative planning practices due to constraints on finances, staff levels and technical capacity. Suggestions for related research and additional MPO capacity building were also highlighted.

The interplay among both the full group and within the small groups was lively and informative. The varied experiences and perspectives of participants from large and small MPOs across the country provided the workshop with energy, intensity and even some humor. Both participants and facilitators, all part of the MPO community, enjoyed meeting their peers and sharing their knowledge and experiences.

Since this was a pilot event, it was also important to hear and understand the participants' perspectives on workshop strengths and weaknesses. Each participant completed a detailed workshop evaluation, which AMPO will use to refine the agenda, format and content for future offerings.

A workshop summary report should be available on the AMPO website by the end of June.

For more information or to discuss options for hosting a workshop, please contact Nicole Waldheim of AMPO at [nwaldheim@ampo.org](mailto:nwaldheim@ampo.org). M

### Speakers/Facilitators

- **Thera Black** of the Thurston Regional Planning Council (Washington State);
- **Tom Weyandt** of the Atlanta Regional Commission (Georgia); and
- **Shawn Seager** of the Mountainland Association of Governments (Utah).

AMPO consultant **Peter Plumeau**, of Wilbur Smith Associates, developed the workshop and was the overall workshop facilitator.

# Innovations in the MPO Planning Process – PlanCheyenne

The Cheyenne Metropolitan Planning Organization is embarking upon a planning effort unparalleled in Cheyenne's history. As the lead agency for PlanCheyenne, the MPO, with support of Laramie County and the City of Cheyenne, will be wrapping three master planning processes together in one innovative process. The three major components include the Transportation Master Plan, the comprehensive land-use plan, and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

By integrating the process and products, the overall plan and process will be much easier for the general public to access. By cross-referencing information, professionals will be able to access planning information from multiple resources, without the frustration of jumping from one plan to the next.

The plan has been segmented into four components: SnapshotCheyenne, StructureCheyenne, ShapeCheyenne, and BuildCheyenne. We have completed the first and second phases of the project and are entering into the land use and transportation modeling discussions. The 'Snapshot' Phase created a foundation for examining the current conditions that exist in our community. We've created "Cliff's notes" guides to different aspects of our community, including transportation, population, economics, schools, recreation, and housing, in addition to a summary of 12 previous planning documents. This 35-page summary will give citizens a clear view on the history of planning in Cheyenne, and as more plans are created, we plan to update the summary document. The products from this phase also include 17 base maps describing the different existing conditions in the Cheyenne Area. These products are currently available on the plan website: [www.plancheyenne.com](http://www.plancheyenne.com).

The second phase — StructureCheyenne — kicked off in December with a Community Design Charrette to discuss the image and physical identity of Cheyenne. This intensive brainstorming session focused on the primary building blocks of our community — Gateways, Corridors, Neighborhoods, Landmarks and Districts — to identify how our community could grow while retaining its unique western identity. Of particular interest to the community are the gateways to Cheyenne. Located at the intersection of I-80 and I-25, our community is at the crossroads of America, but our highway interchanges don't effectively welcome visitors and invite them into our community. During the charrette, the community discussed what the gateways should look like, and

how to put Cheyenne's best foot forward to our interstate travelers. The final product from this phase will be a Community Design Handbook, outlining with graphics, sketches and photos how our community can achieve the goals maintaining Cheyenne's authenticity, quality of life, and character. A draft of these materials is currently available on the website.

ShapeCheyenne is the third phase of the project, and will integrate various aspects of the community to create alternative land use scenarios. After several revisions, a preferred scenario for growth will be identified in conjunction with the future transportation system. Parks and Recreation considerations will also be integrated to provide the community with a plan that is truly comprehensive.

**The plan has been segmented into four components: SnapshotCheyenne, StructureCheyenne, ShapeCheyenne, and BuildCheyenne**

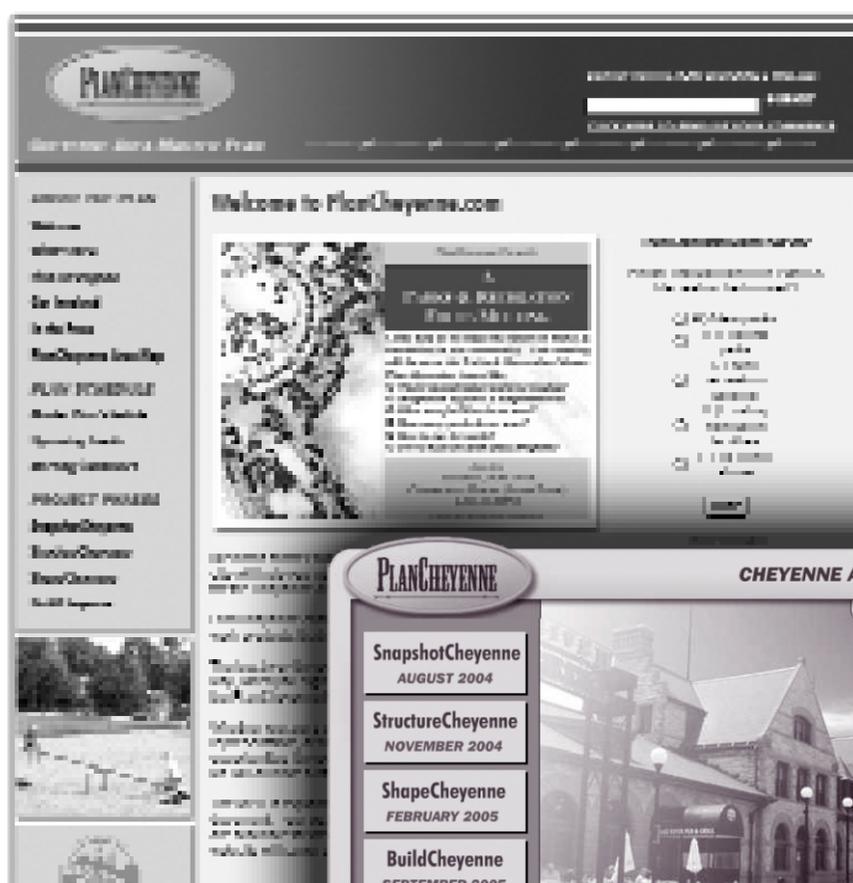
And finally, what would a plan be without the means to implement the vision? BuildCheyenne is the community's toolbox for implementing the plan's vision, while taking into account the regulatory environment present in Cheyenne. We will be producing "white paper" reports on implementation options, including examples from other communities in the region who have faced similar issues. These reports will give Cheyenne the necessary information to progress forward in an intelligent manner that is unique and fitting to our community.

One of the most vital aspects of the plan is public involvement. From the very start of the process, the internet has been a key component of PlanCheyenne. We have refined the plan website, [www.plancheyenne.com](http://www.plancheyenne.com), based on comments from the community. Included are opportunities for citizens to sign up for a PlanCheyenne List-Serve where they receive information on upcoming events and notification on plan drafts. We also have a place for people to send in comments electronically to encourage participation that's easy for the public. To keep people interested in and involved with the website, we've added an electronic survey feature to increase the site's interactive capabilities. These innovations are helping the Cheyenne MPO reach the community like never before.

A planner's job is to listen to the public, and PlanCheyenne is working hard to accomplish that goal. Instead of always asking the public to meet us on our turf, we've set up displays at local grocery stores to meet people in locations convenient to them. Thus far the public's response has been favorable, with an average of over 100 people attending public meetings to date.

The youth in our community are also playing a vital role in the plan. High School students are included as members of the Citizen Steering Committee, and photo classes have joined the effort by participating in a visual inventory exercise. Our local community college has even developed a course curriculum that is focusing on PlanCheyenne to get students involved in mapping the amenities in our community that attract college students and young professionals.

We're excited about the progress and vision of PlanCheyenne and look forward to harnessing the excitement present today in our community for the benefit of future generations. Please be sure to visit our website for more information! **M**



[www.plancheyenne.com](http://www.plancheyenne.com)

# MPOs and TELUS – Technical Tool to Check Out

**A**MPO is working with the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) to assist with deployment of TELUS, the Transportation, Economic, and Land Use System, to MPOs.

TELUS is a computerized data management information system that sorts, analyzes, combines and tracks the progress of transportation projects and assesses their economic and land use impacts and interrelationships.

The automated planning system includes five main modules:

1. The project information module contains basic data about every project in the transportation improvement program (TIP), or state transportation improvement program (STIP);
2. The project tracking module maintains the status of single and multiyear projects;
3. The project interrelationships module identifies potential conflicts in scheduling, funding, location and other requirements;
4. The project-scoring module offers the option of a built-in or agency specific customized scoring and ranking system; and
5. The planning analysis module calculates the degree to which the entire TIP or STIP meets the seven TEA-21 planning objectives.

Projects and their interrelationships are visually displayed using a Geographic Information System. The project information module displays detailed project information that includes project number, description, location, investment type, funding sources, and phasing/scheduling. On the GIS screens, users can view the location of a project and zoom in for greater detail.

It provides information in real time to interested parties and promotes greater collaboration between MPOs and state DOTs.

While the software is valuable to MPO, state DOT, and other public agency staff, it also promotes public participation in the planning process by enabling review of planned projects at a public workstation at the agency, in the case of desktop TELUS, and via the Internet from home, public libraries and government offices, in the case of Web-TELUS.

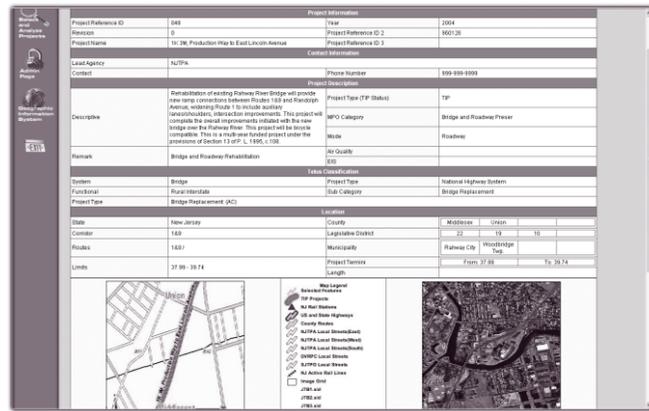
Version 4.0 of TELUS will be available this summer. This improved release will offer several new features, including:

- an improved user interface with user friendly screens;
- advanced GIS and Input Output Model reports;
- Tool tips that assist the users in easy navigation;
- a Long Range Plan option that allows users to include their long range projects apart from TIP, non TIP and pre TIP projects;
- a Check Budget tool to allow the user to determine if he or she is exceeding his or her budget limit when allocating funding to projects;
- Project Picture, which allows the user to upload a project picture; and
- new economic factors such as business revenue, profit and indirect business taxes.

TELUS and TELUM are license-free to all public transportation agencies, MPOs and state DOTs. More than 100 MPOs use TELUS, according to Dr. Lazar Spasovic, TELUS Program Manager, and

Adhish Vyas of the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT).

AMPO is publishing information about TELUS, assisting MPOs who are interested in obtaining the software and training, and monitoring progress and collecting feedback for NJIT. If you are interested in TELUS, please contact Rich Denbow at [rdenbow@ampo.org](mailto:rdenbow@ampo.org) or (703) 319-9300. More information can be found at <http://www.telus-national.org/> M



A screen shot of project information stored in TELUS.

## TELUS in Action – Perspectives from the Broward County MPO

Marcia Davis,  
Assistant  
Planner, and  
Roger Del Rio,  
Acting Director  
of the Broward



County MPO in South Florida wrote this testimonial about their experience working with the TELUS software and the NJIT staff.

The Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization (BCMPO) has worked extensively with the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) for the past six years to develop the Transportation Economic Land Use System (TELUS) as the base to develop the Transportation Improvement Program for Broward County. The BCMPO was selected by NJIT along with approximately twelve other MPOs throughout the country to be beta-testers for its' new software.

After determining that TELUS – being compatible with Microsoft Windows and other Microsoft products – was the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) management tool of the future, the switch was made to migrate from a mainframe computer platform to a PC desktop platform. Starting in Fiscal Year 2002/03, the BCMPO began using its' new TELUS database for updating TIP information. TELUS proved valuable to TIP management by facilitating the compilation of each year's TIP document.

The NJIT group has always been easily accessible to answer questions from the simple to the complex. Our user concerns and comments have been used to improve the software package. In fact, our input has assisted NJIT in their recent development of a web-based version. Thus far, it appears to be even more efficient and friendlier than the PC version. When migration to the web-based TELUS is completed, the BCMPO's TIP will be easily accessible for viewing by anyone on the worldwide web. Broward County anticipates that next spring, the FY 2006/07–FY 2010/11 TIP will be developed in the web-based format, thereby enhancing the availability of transportation project information for the public in a friendly format that, in turn, will promote public input back to the BCMPO.

Not only is TELUS a wonderful tool for TIP management, but the service which the developers and support team provide is excellent. TELUS has offered solutions to satisfy our ever-changing TIP requirements as the BCMPO grows to meet the needs of our communities and region while meeting the requirements of our state and federal funding agencies.



TELUS incorporates GIS tools to display project information.

TELUS has an Input-Output Model that allows users to estimate and display the number of jobs, earnings (salaries/wages), business revenue, local, state and federal tax revenue, etc., resulting from investments in projects. TELUM is a land-use model that utilizes the output of a travel demand forecasting model to project changes in land use (population and employment by zone) based upon changes in the transportation system. The final version of TELUM is available now.

Desktop TELUS can run stand alone on individual computers or on a network. The Web-TELUS version integrates with an agency's existing TIP/STIP database stored in a relational database-management system.

# MPOs Tackle Mobility

## Houston-Galveston Area Council – Commute Solutions Program

As a severe ozone nonattainment area, the Houston-Galveston region must take aggressive steps to reduce emissions of ozone precursors. The Houston-Galveston Area Council, as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO), has taken the lead in developing programs to reduce emissions from on-road sources, educate the public about ozone, and provide alternatives to single-occupant vehicle (SOV) driving that will reduce emissions and congestion.

In 1996, the MPO's Transportation Policy Council and H-GAC's Board agreed to support the implementation of the Commute Solutions program. The primary purpose of this program is to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality in our region by promoting alternative transportation options, such as vanpool programs, school pool programs, and teleworking programs to the residents of Harris County and the other counties that comprise the Houston-Galveston Transportation Management Area (TMA).

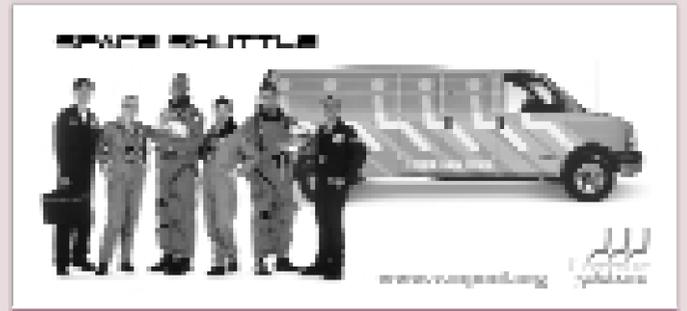
As part of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for attainment of the ozone standard, the H-GAC Commute Solutions program is required to reduce on-road emissions by one-half to one ton per day through alternative transportation options by November 2007.

The first component of the Commute Solutions program was developed when H-GAC entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) in 1996 to administer the vanpool program. At that time, there were 200 vanpools in operation. Since then, the METROVan program has grown to 378

vanpools, representing approximately 4,742 daily riders – the fourth largest vanpool program in the United States. METRO uses ridematching software to match 9–15 riders in each vanpool and each rider is provided a \$35/month subsidy after riding for free the first month. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program funds are used for the subsidy.

In 2004, H-GAC added a new component to the vanpool program to focus growth in three construction corridors (IH-10 West, U.S. 59 South, and Loop 610 West) and alleviate traffic congestion associated with disruptions from extended construction schedules. People working in or traveling through these corridors are matched in smaller, 5–8-passenger vans, and each rider receives a \$50 incentive (funded through CMAQ). The incentive allows this program to be just as cost-efficient and convenient as the regular vanpool program. So far, 39 vanpools have been formed.

In 1999, H-GAC initiated a teleworking program to help reduce congestion and emissions, as well as provide flexibility to employees. H-GAC markets the telework program through billboards, print media, television and radio interviews, radio advertisements, direct mail, workshops, and with the support of Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs) throughout the region. There are 18 companies who are currently participating in the Commute Solutions teleworking program.



A print ad for the Commute Solutions program, which encourages people to use vanpools, minipools, and telework.

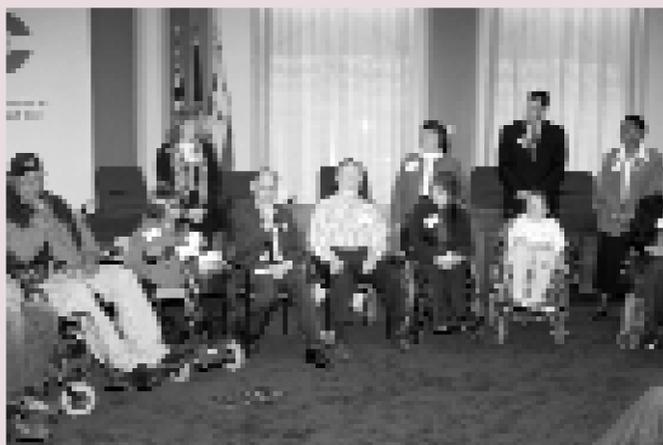
H-GAC's School Pool Program was initiated in 2003 and is being promoted in the school districts within the eight-county region. School Pool is a voluntary program that offers free carpool matching services to parents interested in forming carpools for their children. So far, 6 school districts have joined the School Pool Program.

H-GAC's Commute Solutions has expanded its participation throughout the region by coordinating the Environmental Protection Agency's Best Workplaces for Commuters program, a national recognition program for companies that offer commuter benefits. Best Workplaces for Commuters<sup>SM</sup> kicked off in the Houston area in 2003 and approximately 75 employers have earned the designation so far. Companies that make the list demonstrate their ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life for employees by offering commuter benefits, such as employer-provided transit passes, vanpool incentives, and telework programs, while also contributing to improved air quality throughout the region. The companies are recognized at the annual Commute Solutions and Leadership Awards and Luncheon. **M**

## National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board – Accessible Transportation

Members of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the MPO for metropolitan Washington D.C., joined people with disabilities from across the region and members of the media to raise awareness about the important role accessible transportation plays in getting people with disabilities to work. To highlight the typical workday commute of people with disabilities, eleven travel teams – each including a person with a disability, a regional transportation leader from the TPB and a member of the media – trekked to a press conference held October 20th at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) headquarters near Union Station. The TPB's Access for All (AFA) advisory committee sponsored the event, Disability Awareness Day, which focused on pedestrian, bus, rail and para-transit access.

At the press conference, travel team members shared details of their commute, highlighting accessibility features and challenges encountered along the way. Specific challenges included elevator outages, narrow sidewalks crowded with people, poorly placed objects such as fire hydrants and parking meters, poorly placed or missing



Participants at Disability Awareness Day, which focused on pedestrian, bus, rail and para-transit access.

curb ramps, and confusion and delays associated with para-transit shuttle bus services. Travel team participants also had praise for the progress the region has made towards accessible transportation since the passage of the American with Disabilities Act 14 years ago, such as the installation of wheelchair lifts on over 90 percent of the region's buses, and the installation of audible pedestrian signals at selected busy intersections.

Transportation is a significant barrier for people with disabilities in gaining employment. According to a 2004 National Organization on Disability (NOD)/Harris national survey, persons with disabilities are twice as likely to have inadequate trans-

portation as persons without disabilities. In the Washington region, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is twice that of the general population. By hosting the Disability Awareness Day event, the TPB helped to raise awareness of these issues and encouraged local jurisdictions to work together to create a transit and pedestrian system that provides access to all.

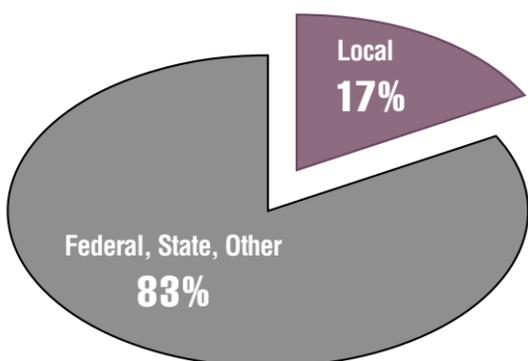
At the TPB's October meeting, which followed the press conference, members voted to support a resolution recognizing "the importance of accessible and dependable transit service, sidewalks, and safe pedestrian crossings for people with disabilities." The AFA Committee has further recommended a comprehensive study of curb-to-curb services to identify the most cost-effective ways to serve the greatest number of people. AFA will continue to advocate for improved Metrorail and bus reliability and coordinated accessibility efforts with regional and local transit providers.

For more information, see the Disability Awareness Day website at <http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/disabilityawareness/> or contact Wendy Klancher at (202) 962-3321. **M**

## AMPO Survey Results: Local Match

Imagine my delight when, as a kid, my parents responded in the affirmative to my request for the coveted new Air Jordans. But there was a catch – I had to contribute twenty bucks to the cause. Parting with allowance money for which I had no doubt labored tirelessly at first seemed an unreasonable burden, but in the end, atop my shiny new high-tops, I came to peace with the sacrifice. Not only could I run faster and jump higher than kids lacking the latest in sneaker technology, but it felt grown-up to have contributed to their purchase, and thus I treated the shoes with a touch more respect than that to which previous pairs were accustomed. Plus, my part-ownership of the shoes usurped some of my parents' authority to dictate on which occasions Air Jordans were perhaps not the appropriate footwear choice.

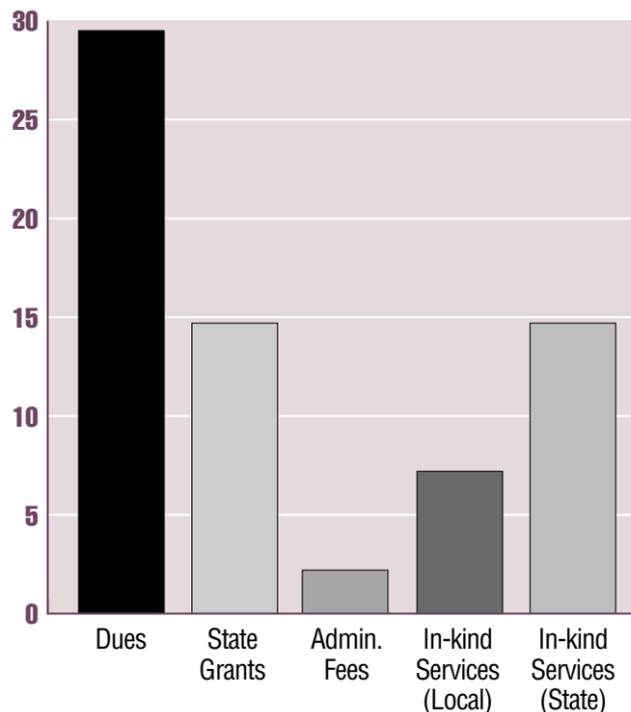
While it may be slightly misguided to equate youth sneaker fads with the metropolitan transportation planning process, matching requirements for federal metropolitan planning funds appear to inspire similar results in the MPO community. Some might prefer a pure endowment from the Feds, but there's much to be said for the additional resources, increased sense of local responsibility and extended freedom available to MPOs because of their local contributions.



Just like some kids have an allowance and others must be more creative in their fundraising, MPOs use a variety of methods to come up with their match.

To gather information on how MPOs derive their required local match for federal metropolitan planning funds, AMPO devised and conducted a survey. 101 MPOs heard our call and revealed their methods, which range from "allowances" or in-kind services from parental states, to infusions of tax revenue collected by avuncular transit agencies, to industrious do-it-yourself local arrangements that accumulate in-kind match. With this variety, and the fact that three-quarters of MPOs derive their local match from more than one source, no patterns emerge for MPOs large or small, east or west. The largest single source of local match for the average MPO is dues paid by member governments, accounting for approximately thirty percent of the required match. That's followed by state grants and in-kind services from states, each accounting for a tad under fifteen percent of the average MPO's match.

Over three-quarters of MPOs receive dues or other financial contributions from local cities, and two-thirds from counties. Fourteen and thirteen percent receive dues from states and transit agencies, respectively, while a few MPOs get the same from ports and private entities. In addition other bodies, such as public school boards, universities, and water/sewer authorities contribute to a few MPOs. Forty-three percent of MPOs



structure their dues in some way relative to population, but land area, share of VMT, voting members on the MPO board, and flat rates are among the other methods used across the country.

On average, MPOs generate seventeen percent of their overall budgets locally. With that money, MPOs can run faster and jump higher than they could without it, and no doubt are stronger institutions as a result. By no means does that mean metropolitan transportation planning has yet garnered the federal financial backing it needs and deserves – many MPOs are still sporting Chuck Taylors – but it does illuminate the strong local investment so vital to supporting the MPO process.

View the results to this and other AMPO Surveys at: [http://www.ampo.org/survey\\_results.html](http://www.ampo.org/survey_results.html). **M**

## AMPO Annual Conference

Welcome to Denver, Colorado! The 2005 AMPO Annual Conference brings you to the Mile High City and the base of the Rocky Mountains for three days of work as well as three days of exploration. The conference will be held from October 11th – 14th at the Grand Hyatt Denver. The program will feature a special half-day version of AMPO's Workshop on Integrating Transportation and Land Use Planning, a day-long session focusing on the future of MPOs, exciting field trips throughout the Denver area, and much more. This conference is geared towards MPO Executive Directors, technical staff, and Policy Board Elected Officials.

The host hotel for the 2005 AMPO Annual Conference is the Grand Hyatt Denver. The Hyatt is located at 1750 Welton Street in downtown Denver. Discounted room rates of \$159 single/\$169 double are available until **September 19, 2005**. All reservations must be made individually through the Hotel's Reservation Department by calling (303) 295-1234 or 1-800-233-1234. Simply reference "AMPO Annual Conference."

Conference registration will begin in July. Please continue to check the conference web page at <http://www.ampo.org/events/2005/generalinfo.html> for the agenda, workshop descriptions, registration information, and more.

For additional information, contact Nicole Waldheim, AMPO Metropolitan Programs Coordinator at [nwaldheim@ampo.org](mailto:nwaldheim@ampo.org) or 202-296-7051 x4. **M**



# New MPO Spotlight – South Georgia Regional Development Center Hits the Ground Running

The Valdosta – Lowndes area has a rich history which has inspired growth, prosperity, and a dedication to progress.

Lowndes County has grown by 215% since 1930. During the past decade alone, the population grew by 21%. Based on 2000 census figures, Valdosta was one of four new urbanized areas in the State of Georgia (others were Hinesville, Dalton and Gainesville). Regional growth prompted the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) status comprising Lowndes, Lanier, Brooks and Echols Counties. Along with increased visibility the metropolitan status will provide increased federal funding and further economic growth potential.

Lowndes County had a 2000 population of 92,115 and serves as a regional employment and retail hub for a thirteen county area serving over 300,000 people. It is also home to Moody Air Force Base with 4,500 military employees, the South Georgia Medical Center which has 2,300 employees and Valdosta State University which employs over 2,200 people and has 10,000 enrolled students.

With the emergence of the metropolitan status came the requirement to establish a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

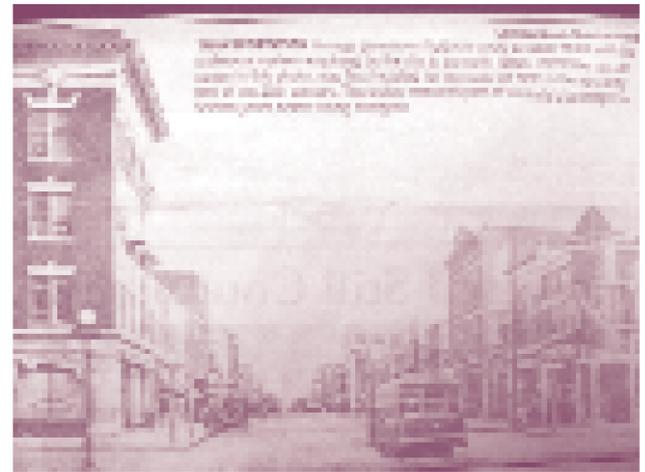
The Long Range Plan is currently in development and must be adopted by October 2005. At present the base year model has been developed and future forecasts are being prepared. Once the forecasts have been superimposed over the base year conditions, identification of current/future needs can be assessed. At this point several alternatives will be tested and evaluated in terms of meeting the goals/objectives identified in the plan as well as the fiscal constraints regarding project costs.

“The travel demand model is by no means a crystal ball” states Daniel McGee, MPO Transportation Planning Coordinator at the SGRDC; “but if based on sound assumptions can provide a good planning tool”. The city and county have progressive leadership and planners that are focused and committed to providing a better quality of life and efficient delivery of services. Numerous activities have occurred to illustrate this dedication:

The city has invested over one million dollars on setting up a Traffic Management Center (TMC) which will assist the city engineering staff to develop coordinated traffic flow and surveillance at various intersections. Phase I included installation of twenty-two miles of fiber with video surveillance at over twenty intersections. Phase II will require installing an additional forty-two miles of fiber with eighteen cameras. Both phases are financed with Special Purpose Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) revenues and DOT assistance.

This ITS application will provide other opportunities such as enhancing emergency response, synchronization of traffic signal operations, and coordination of special events or disaster mitigation planning.

The city and county also work cooperatively regarding land use planning and consolidated services. The Parks and Recreation department is consolidated as well as the local Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Authority and Inspections & Zoning Departments.



Early transportation in South Georgia

The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (GLPC) is a multi-governmental board that reviews the recommendations and decisions regarding zoning, subdivisions, and commercial developments.

The SGRDC is currently updating the 2025 Comprehensive Plan for Lowndes County. This will outline the goals for the community and serve as a means to manage growth. This will coincide nicely with the LRPT (being completed) with regard to data collection and integrating these plans with those of the comprehensive plan to avoid conflicting policies and projects.

The SGRDC has developed a GIS mapping service called VALOR that enables various governmental departments access to parcel data, tax information, and other infrastructure data in order to provide efficient management of governmental services and resources.

The Valdosta Police Department and Lowndes County Sheriffs Office have recently obtained lap tops within their squad cars. The SGRDC developed a mapping and reporting software to assist in locating emergency calls. The SGRDC GIS Department maps crime and accident data to assist officers with enforcement and surveillance of high crime or accident areas.

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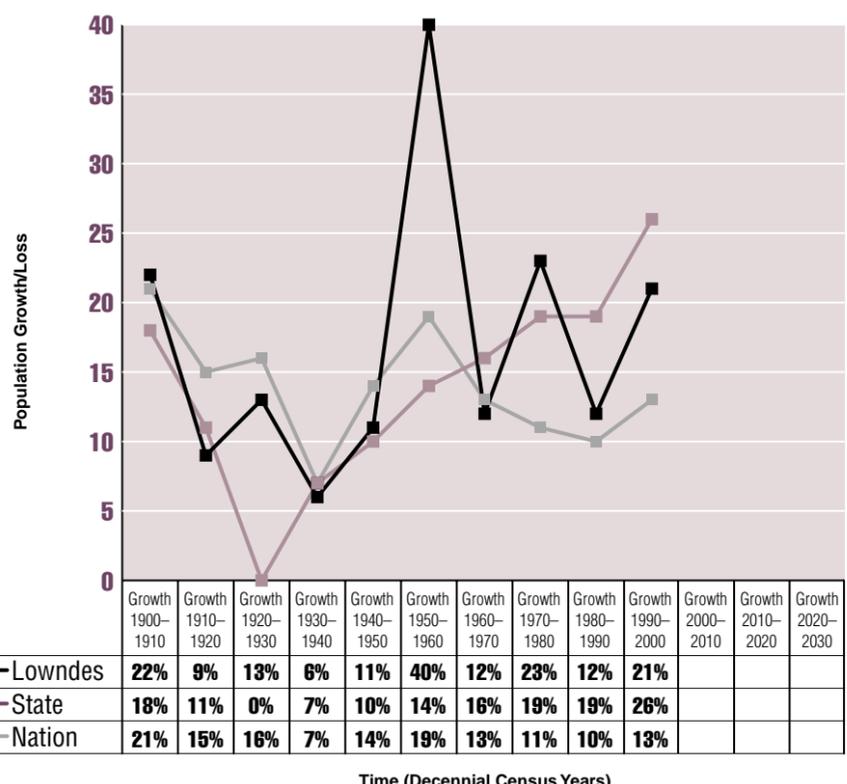


Traffic Management Center

for the Valdosta Urbanized Area. In May of 2002, Governor Perdue designated the South Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC) as the MPO for Valdosta-Lowndes County.

The SGRDC is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for a nine county area including Ben Hill, Brooks, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Tift and Turner Counties. There are a total of 22 municipalities that have been served for over 30 years. The South Georgia RDC provides a myriad of services including: Comprehensive planning; community and workforce development; Information Technology services; Geographic Information Systems; grant writing; and financial management services.

In terms of the transportation planning functions, the RDC has hired an MPO Coordinator to facilitate the formation of the three committees (Policy, Technical, and Citizens' Advisory Committee), develop a Memorandum of Understanding (between the MPO and municipalities thereof), the annual Work Program, the Public Involvement Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Long Range Transportation Plan.



# Upcoming Events

## Texas Transportation Summit

On August 9–12, 2005, the City of Irving, Texas and dozens of co-host cities, counties and national transportation organizations will host the 8th Annual Texas Transportation Summit at the Omni Mandalay Hotel at Las Colinas. The Summit has grown into one of the nation's largest and most anticipated transportation conferences!

This year's event will kick off a yearlong celebration of the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Interstate Highway System. As always, the multimodal conference will also feature highly relevant modal tracks on issues such as surface transportation; air, sea & rail; transit; and governance.

Confirmed speakers include U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Ellen Engleman Conners, more than a dozen members of Congress, U.S. Deputy Assistant

Transportation Secretary George Schoener, representatives of domestic and international transportation agencies and countless others. You will also not want to miss the historical transportation perspective given by William Withuhn, curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

For more information regarding participation and/or sponsorship, visit us on the web at [www.texastransportationsummit.com](http://www.texastransportationsummit.com) or contact Trudy Hester at 214.750.0123. **M**



## New Partners for Smart Growth

The 2006 national multidisciplinary event will build on the tremendous success of the past four **New Partners for Smart Growth** conferences, held in San Diego in 2002, New Orleans in 2003, Portland, Oregon, in 2004, and Miami Beach in 2005.

Smart growth attracts many people from multiple endeavors. Some are regulators, some are doers, and some are users. This conference is about coordinating the needs and activities of this diverse group to help us all begin to speak the same language and paddle in the same direction.

The program will feature cutting-edge smart growth issues, the latest research, implementation tools and strategies, studies of successful cases, interactive learning exper-

iences, new partners, new projects, and new policies. Most important, this event offers you the opportunity to network and coordinate with your peers and practitioners from many different disciplines with the same goal—building safe, healthy, and livable communities for all.

The program will feature three full days of focused training, implementation sessions, breakouts, tours of local model projects, salon sessions, and mobile workshops.

### Who Should Attend

The conference will draw a multidisciplinary audience of local elected officials, city and county staff, landscape architects, developers and builders, planners, transportation professionals and traffic engineers, health professionals and public health advocates, architects, advocates for social equity and affordable housing, realtors, urban designers, lenders, crime prevention professionals, parks

and recreation professionals, advocates for older adults and youth, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, labor representatives, and others committed to building safer, healthier, and more livable communities everywhere.

### Location and Accommodations

The conference will be held at the Adam's Mark Hotel in beautiful downtown Denver. The special room rate for participants at the conference is \$112, single or double occupancy. To make your reservation, call 800-444-2326 and indicate that you will be attending the New Partners conference.

### For additional information, contact:

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## 2005 Northeastern Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Workshop

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) and New Jersey DOT are sponsoring the Northeast CIA Workshop in Trenton, New Jersey from September 11–14, 2005. This workshop will provide practitioners from the region, and throughout the country, an opportunity to discuss innovative Community Impact Assessment methodologies, practices and tools that will result in better planning and engineering.

Practitioners will discuss:

Ways to reinvest in our urban centers and older suburbs; where infrastructure and road networks already exist; Development along existing mass transit corridors; Techniques to reach and engage traditionally underserved populations and populations with limited English proficiency in the plan-

ning process; How to identify and mitigate secondary and indirect impacts; and Planning Smart and Fair.

For more information, visit <http://www.trb.org/Conferences/NECIA/> or email [TRBmeetings@NAS.edu](mailto:TRBmeetings@NAS.edu). **M**



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# South Georgia Regional Development Center Hits the Ground Running *continued from page 6*

Currently Lowndes County is in the process of developing a Unified Land Development Code that will consolidate all existing ordinances into a cohesive framework. There will be a variety of workshops and public meetings to ensure community involvement, which is essential for successful plans.

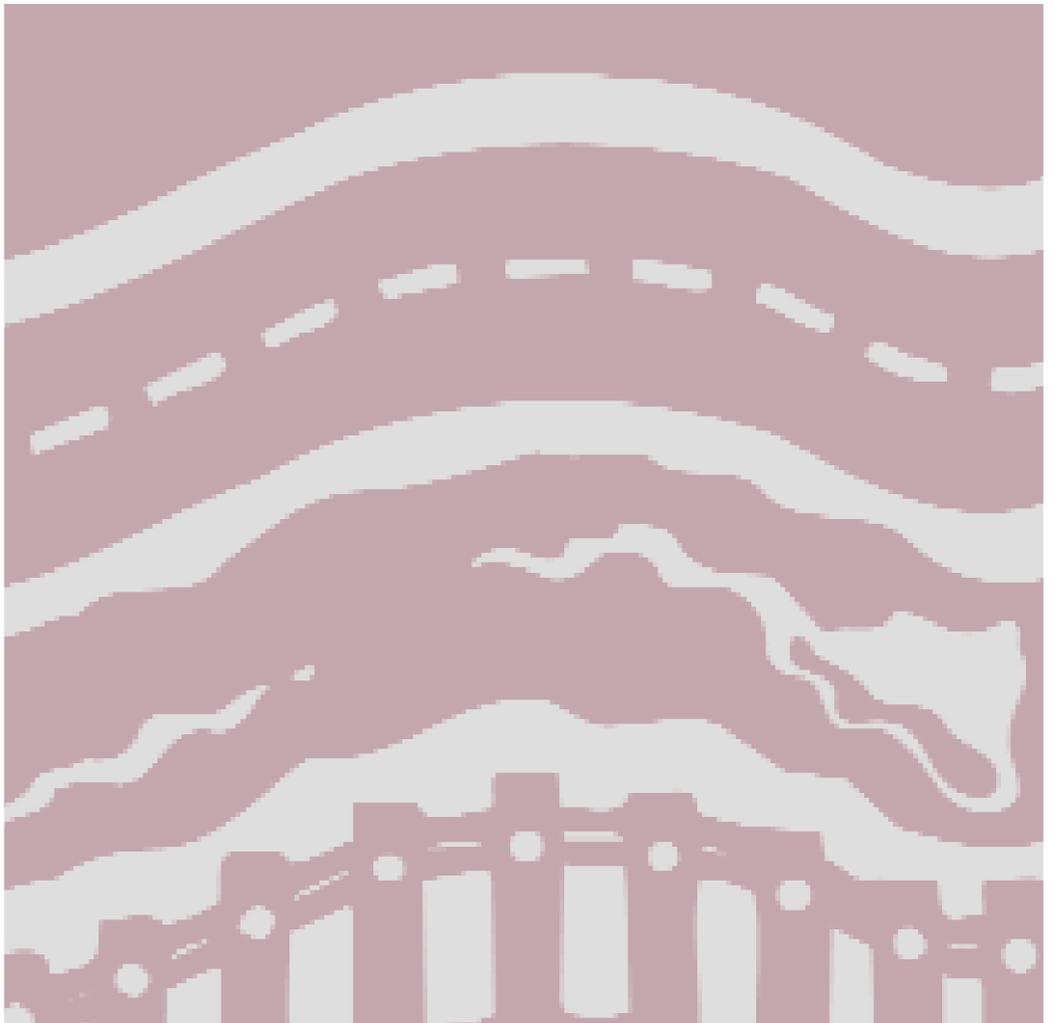
Lowndes County has also developed a Water Resource Protection District Ordinance to preserve the natural resources in the county. Planned development regulations are in development to provide for more flexible and innovative design for land use.

In terms of the county roads, Lowndes has used GDOT- Local Area Road Program (LARP) funds to upgrade and maintain

county roads. The county utilizes a Pavement Analysis and Conditions Evaluation (PACE) system to rate roadways and prioritize improvements.

The transportation system in the Valdosta-Lowndes County area provides an essential foundation for the sound development of the urban area's social, economic, and physical structure. Changes to it can affect land use, accessibility, regional mobility, environmental quality, development patterns, and economic development.

Thus, effective and coordinated regional transportation planning activities are vital to improving the safety and efficiency of the transportation system, while achieving the community's development and preservation goals. **M**



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