

Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

In order to efficiently and effectively coordinate the use of federal funding for transportation projects which may be located in or otherwise impact several political jurisdictions, the Governor of each state designates a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in each urban area having a population of 50,000 or greater. The MPO includes elected officials of each political unit within the urban area, and usually also includes representatives of the State Department of Transportation and any mass transportation providers located there. It is their responsibility to vote on every federal transportation dollar that comes to the Mobile MPO study area. The following is the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization:

VOTING MEMBERS

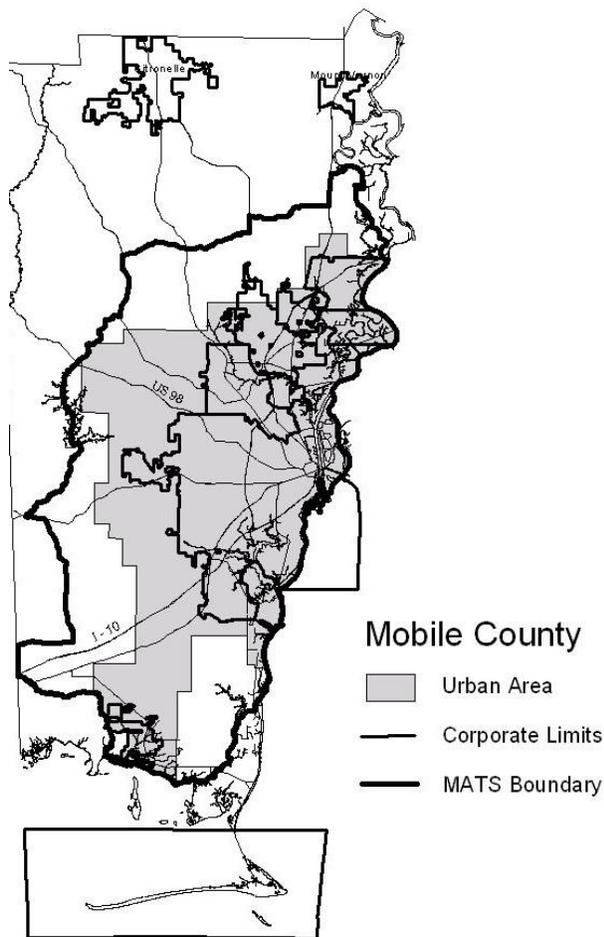
Mayor, City of Mobile
Councilmember, City of Mobile
Councilmember, City of Mobile
Commissioner, Mobile County
Mobile County Engineer
Mayor, City of Prichard
Councilmember, City of Prichard
Mayor, City of Chickasaw
Mayor, City of Saraland
Mayor, City of Satsuma
Mayor, City of Creola
Mayor, City of Bayou La Batre
Mayor, City of Semmes
Southwest Region Engineer
The Wave Transit
At-Large Member

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

ALDOT, State
Executive Director, SARPC
FHWA

The MPO provides its members a forum for interactive and cooperative decision-making regarding projects which may have regional impacts in addition to the more obvious local ones. In the Mobile area, this program involving citizens, dozens of technical staff personnel from various governments and agencies in addition to the MPO members themselves, is called the Mobile Area Transportation Study - or MATS.

The Mobile MPO controls the scheduling of one funding source, the Surface Transportation Program (STP) Mobile Attributable funds that requires a 20% match and is to be spent strictly within the study area of the MATS. Other federal funding sources that are listed in the local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) include; Other STP, National Highway System, Interstate System, Enhancement, Transit, Safety, Other Federal and State, High Priority and Congressional Earmark projects. The State of Alabama controls the scheduling of projects funded with these sources, which not including earmarks totals over \$650 Million annually for the entire State of Alabama. The MPO must vote to include any surface transportation project to be assisted with federal funds in the MATS area (see map below) into the TIP.



Citizens and technical staff personnel make up the joint Technical Coordinating Committee/Citizens Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC). It is this committee's responsibility to provide input and recommendations to develop the locally derived STP Mobile Attributable section of the Transportation Improvement Program, the Transportation Long Range Plan, the Unified Planning Work Program, and all other programs called upon to be voted on by the 16 member Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Agencies seeking project assistance from the STP Mobile Attributable funding source, must bring the projects to the table to be discussed at the TCC/CAC

meetings. Cost estimates of Preliminary Engineering, Right of Way, Utilities and Construction must be provided (all federally assisted transportation capital improvement projects requiring additional lanes must be projects identified by SARPC's Transportation Long Range Plan). If the TCC/CAC abides, the project will be presented to the MPO to vote on as to whether or not to use STP Mobile Attributable funds to complete projects. It is not the responsibility of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) to bring projects to the table to be completed with the MPO's dedicated funding source. That is the responsibility of a sponsoring agency that is willing to provide the 20 percent matching funds for the capital improvement projects or transportation planning projects.

Agencies seeking other federal funding to assist with transportation projects must request funding and communicate with the Alabama Department of Transportation. Again, all federally assisted transportation capital improvement projects requiring additional lanes must be projects identified by SARPC's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is responsible for conducting the administrative and technical aspects of the MATS program on behalf of the MPO. SARPC's role in the program is not intended to usurp the planning or implementation authority of local government, but rather to assimilate the individual plans and produce one transportation plan coordinated across all jurisdictions, with

implementation authority distributed among all levels of government. In brief, this entails administrative details such as setting-up meetings and agendas, recording and preparing meeting minutes, compiling and submitting reports and documentation required by state and federal agencies; and technical tasks such as reviewing local planning documents, compiling socio-economic data and projecting demographic trends, maintaining traffic count records within the study area, developing and updating the computer models used to simulate future traffic conditions under the various possible scenarios of forecast population and land use, formulating recommendations for future transportation improvements - both long and short-term - for all surface transportation modes and their interface with other modes, and publishing documentation on both the long and short-term transportation needs and project implementation schedules in the Mobile area as determined by the MPO.

In addition to the annual, continuing tasks outlined above, SARPC also helps MPO members identify specific, unique transportation needs or problems and may contract a consultant to conduct studies responsive to those needs. Funding for the MATS program and the studies it produces is provided through the Alabama Department of Transportation by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, with local matching funds provided by Mobile County and the cities of Mobile, Prichard, Chickasaw, Saraland, Satsuma, Creola, Bayou La Batre and Semmes. As a direct result of these efforts, \$6.2 million per year in federal highway is made available to the Mobile urban area for transportation improvements and over \$3 million per year for urban transit. These funds are scheduled for project funding by the MPO through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).