

ROME/FLOYD COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



Sept 23, 2020

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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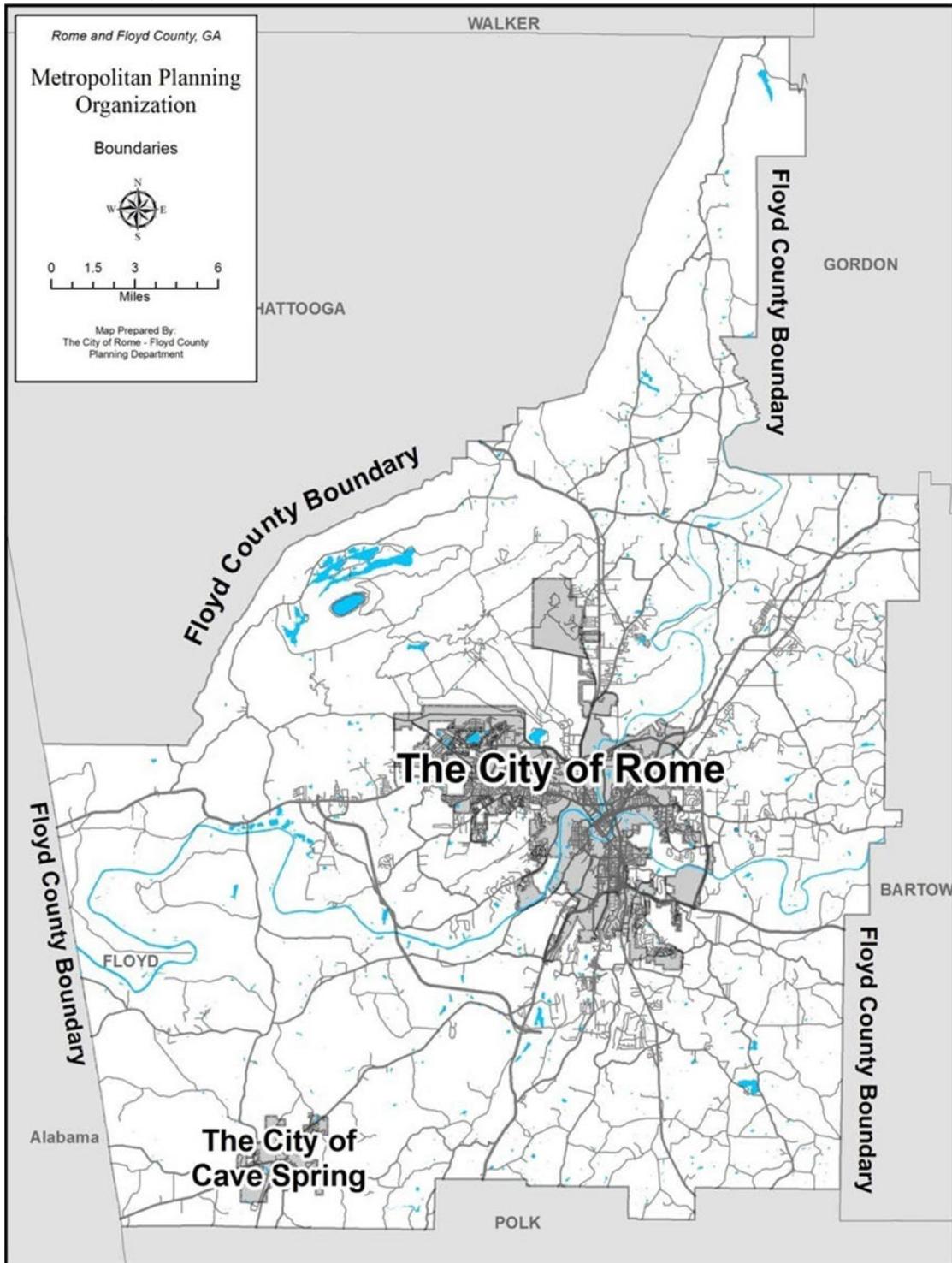
SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316, the Rome/Floyd County Metropolitan Planning Organization is required to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation, and consultation throughout the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under this requirement, the Rome/Floyd County MPO must allow for:

- Adequate public notice of public activities
- Review and comment at key decision points in the development of the MTP and TIP
- Multiple, accessible participation formats, including electronic and in-person
- Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved

The Rome/Floyd County MPO should develop a collaborative and comprehensive public participation plan, in full collaboration with the public and stakeholder communities, to be used in the development of the MTP and TIP, as well as to frame the strategies for public and stakeholder communication and collaboration in all phases of the planning process. The participation plan itself must be prepared by MPO staff with a 45-day public review and comment period.

Rome/Floyd MPO BOUNDARY



SECTION II: PURPOSE OF PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Participation Plan is required by law under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) which underscores the need for public involvement. It requires metropolitan planning agencies such as the Rome/Floyd MPO to provide a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to respond to key transportation issues that affect the Floyd County region.

The MPO in coordination with local governments, local transportation agencies, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducts the transportation planning process. The FAST Act has not changed the existing Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning goals or the process of administering federal planning funds to the MPOs. Under the FAST Act these planning factors remain unchanged. The ten (10) planning factors are as follows: (23 USC 134)

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 of people and for freight;
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the 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, and;
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.

Among the specific areas identified by the Rome/Floyd County MPO, the state and federal government to consider in designing this process include:

1. Transportation planning process shall include a proactive participation process that provides complete information and involvement in developing plans and programs to be distributed to local and state agencies.
2. Requires a minimum 45 days public review and comment period before the participation process is initially adopted or revised.
3. Must provide timely information to segments of community affected by plans, programs, and projects.

4. Provide reasonable public access to information used in development of plans and TIPS; and provide open public meetings where matters related to federal-aid highway and transit are considered.
5. Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities, including but not limited to plans and TIPS.
6. Demonstrate consideration of and response to public input.
7. Seek out and consider needs of the traditionally under-served, including but not limited to low-income and minority households.
8. When significant comments on the draft transportation plan or TIP are received, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan and TIP and shall be copied to these commenters.
9. Significant revisions of the plan or TIP will require an additional period of public review.
10. The participation process will be periodically reviewed by the MPO for effectiveness in providing full and open access.
11. The participation process will be reviewed by FHWA and FTA to assure the process provides full and open access to the decision-making process.
12. The metropolitan participation plan process shall be coordinated with the statewide participation plan process when possible.

The following sections illustrate efforts to incorporate a proactive participation process into the MPO planning process and general responsibilities. Citizens, stakeholders, federal, state, and local partners, and committee members are given ample opportunity to participate in this process. The public involvement process for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Public Participation Plan (PPP), and Special Studies are used to satisfy the Georgia Department of Transportation's public participation process for the Program of Projects (POP). This includes such specific areas as updates to the Rome/Floyd County MPO transportation plan and the MTP, TIP, PPP, and Special Studies.

SECTION III: PARTICIPATION PLAN PROCESS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The committees/agencies listed below each provide a venue for public comment and participation throughout the planning process. These committees/agencies are as follows:

Transportation Policy Committee (TPC)

The Rome/Floyd Policy Committee consists of elected officials and staff representing the jurisdictions, transportation providers and other significant interests in the MPO area. The Policy Committee is responsible for review and approval of goals, objectives, plans, and projects developed by the MPO.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Citizen's Advisory Committee shall advise MPO Policy Committee on matters of public opinion from individual citizens and citizen groups regarding planned changes to the Rome-Floyd Area Transportation Plan, and study findings and recommendations.

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) consists of transportation planners, engineers, and transit providers representing local, regional, and state agencies. The TCC shall coordinate all technical activities in the transportation planning process. The TCC shall provide information on the process of the study to both the Policy Committee and the Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Other Agencies

State/Federal/Local

U.S. Department of Transportation

A Comprehensive, Cooperative, and Continuing process is required for initiatives to be eligible for Federal transportation funding. USDOT works with local and state officials to ensure that the 3C planning process as required by the FAST Act which stipulates that a cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing planning process be carried out.

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)

Responsible for the coordination of the state aspects of any studies, assist in the preparation of analytical techniques as well as play a major role in the development and utilization of computer models for the study.

Planning & Development

Responsible for developing the local work program and provides staff services for the Rome/Floyd County MPO.

1. An Update to the Transportation Plan will consist of the deletion of a project from the Plan, the addition of a project to the Plan, or major changes in the design or scope of a project.
2. Updates to the adopted Transportation Plan will follow the MPO committee structure for the review of projects. This consists of review of the changes by the following committees: 1) CAC, 2) TCC, and 3) the Policy Committee. The CAC and the TCC will forward any comments or recommendations regarding the change to the Policy Committee.
3. Notice of changes to the Transportation Plan will be given in local newspapers at least 15 days before the proposed amendment is reviewed by the CAC. The public notice will invite public comments at this meeting. The CAC will forward a recommendation to the Transportation Policy Committee regarding the proposed Plan amendments.
4. If an individual or group is concerned about a transportation project or policy, they shall address the CAC regarding the issue. The CAC will forward a recommendation to the Policy Committee regarding the matter. The Chairperson of the CAC, who is a voting member of the Policy Committee, will brief the Policy Committee regarding the CAC's findings. The individual or group may also address the Transportation Policy Committee with their concerns, if necessary.

General Public Outreach Efforts

It should be noted that special participation procedures have been developed regarding the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Public Participation Plan (PPP).

- a) **Regularly Scheduled Rome/Floyd County MPO Meetings:** The time, place, and date of all regularly scheduled meetings will be posted in the Governmental Building and in the office of the Rome/Floyd County Planning Department. The media (the designated local newspaper) will be provided notices of all Policy, TCC, and CAC meetings. Televised meetings/virtual meetings will be held and advertised the same as regularly scheduled meetings, if necessary. In addition to the notices, an agenda of items to be discussed is also provided. Notice will be provided to the local newspaper and placed on the City's website at least five days prior to regularly called Policy Committee meetings. Any changes to those meetings' dates, times, or locations will be provided to the local newspaper and posted on the City's websites at least 48 hours prior to the meeting's start time.
- b) **Special-Called Meetings:** The Chairman of each MPO committee may call a special meeting provided that a notice of the time, place, and date of the meeting is posted 24 hours in advance of said meeting. The media will be notified of these meetings.
- c) **Agendas and Minutes:** Agendas for each regularly-called Policy Committee meetings will be available to committee members and the general public prior to each committee meeting. The minutes of all MPO committees will be available at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the committee. Agendas and minutes will be posted on the MPO website.
- d) **Social Media:** The MPO will utilize appropriate social media avenues to post pertinent information and notices on a frequent basis. This also provides another opportunity for the public to provide public input to the MPO's on-going planning process.
- e) **Virtual Meetings:** The MPO will provide online participation opportunities as appropriate, most likely via Zoom. Virtual public meetings will include the same information provided at in-person public meetings and will be advertised at the same time as in-person opportunities. Zoom

information and how to join the virtual meeting will be outlined via email, along with attached agendas, minutes, and any other necessary documents for the meeting. Virtual meetings will only be held in the case of extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the metropolitan planning organization.

- f) **Rome/Floyd Webpage:** The MPO maintains a webpage. The URL for the webpage is <http://romefloyd.com>. Information related to the MPO's planning activities and meeting times, dates, and locations is posted on a regular basis.
- g) **Open Meetings:** All committee meetings will be open to the public.
- h) **Responses to Public Input:** When significant public input is received on draft plans as a result of the public involvement process, a summary analysis, or report on the content of the comments and the responses shall be prepared and made part of the final document and shall be copied to those commenters.
- i) **ADA Consideration:** As set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992, the Rome City Government and the Floyd County Government do not discriminate on the basis of disability, and will assist citizens with special needs given proper notice (seven working days).

Process to Solicit Public and Private Input in the Development and Update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

INITIAL ADOPTION PROCESS:

1. In an effort to facilitate a proactive citizen participation process in the early development of the Plan, staff will schedule meetings with interested groups and other citizens in the community. These meetings will be scheduled early in the process of the preparation of the plan, and before it is presented to the Rome/Floyd County Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the Policy Committee (TPC).
2. The process of these meetings will be to solicit the participants' opinions regarding transportation goals and priorities for the planning area. Notes will be taken at these meetings and any findings incorporated into the planning process.
3. Staff will schedule a general public hearing regarding the transportation plan early in the planning process. The public hearing will be held by the Citizen's Advisory Committee. The Chairperson of the Citizen's Advisory Committee will act as Chairperson for the meetings. Notice of the public hearing will be published in the local newspapers at least 15 days before the hearing. A notice will also be given on all avenues of Social Media utilized by the MPO. Notice will also be given to the database of interested parties encouraging their participation.
4. The purpose of this meeting will be to solicit public-private participation and assist in establishing goals early in the process of preparing the Transportation Plan.
5. A series of public informational meetings will be held at various locations in the study area to solicit local public and private input to the planning process. Notice of these meetings will be given to a local newspaper, and posted on social media platforms at least 15 days before the meeting. All efforts will be taken to hold meetings in facilities that are ADA compliant and located near transit routes.

6. Copies of the Plan will be available for public review at the offices of the Rome/Floyd County Planning Department.
7. Public comments regarding the Plan will be responded to in the appendix of the final Plan.
8. The Plan will be submitted to the appropriate state and federal agencies for review.

Process to Solicit Public Input in the Development and Update of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

INITIAL ADOPTION PROCESS:

1. In an effort to facilitate a proactive citizen participation process in the early development of the Plan, staff will schedule meetings with interested groups and other citizens in the community. These meetings will be scheduled early in the process of the preparation of the plan, and before it is presented to the Rome/Floyd County Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the Policy Committee (TPC).
2. Before the TIP is initially adopted by the Rome/Floyd Policy Committee, a public informational meeting will be held at least 15 days before the meeting at which the TIP is given approval. Notice of this meeting will be published in a newspaper of general circulation at least 15 days before the meeting. Notice of the meeting will be shared on all platforms of the MPO's social media and website.

Process to Solicit Public Input in the Development and Update of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Citizen participation is encouraged in the development of the UPWP through the MPO Planning process which provides opportunities for input into various planning tasks and project review. The MPO Committees consist of a Citizen Advisory Committee, the Technical Committee and the Policy Committee. The implementation of the Unified Planning Work Program is the responsibility of the MPO. The Transportation Policy Committee is responsible for adopting the final Unified Planning Work Program. In addition, any amendments to the UPWP must be approved by the Transportation Policy Committee. The UPWP is readily available to the public in hard copy and on the MPO website.

Process to Solicit Public Input in the Development and Update of the Public Participation Plan (PPP)

A public review period will be required for the adoption or subsequent revision to the Public Participation Process for the Rome/Floyd County MPO. Public notice will be given for this comment period by publishing an advertisement in a newspaper(s) for general circulation at least forty-five (45) days before the final public participation process is adopted or subsequently revised by the Policy Committee. The public notice will be placed on the MPO website as well as other places of general interest. The public review notice will also be made available to other interested parties (i.e. public transit agencies, freight companies, and bike/ped users). In addition, the public review period notice will be made available in minority publications and on public transit buses for minority and low-income

groups. The proposed Public Participation Plan will be made available to the public at the Rome/Floyd County Planning Department Office and on the MPO website located at www.romefloyd.com.

SECTION IV: AMENDMENT PROCESS

In some cases, it may be necessary to amend certain planning documents. The information below summarizes the amendment process under the Rome/Floyd County program in case revisions are needed.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

If the Policy Committee determines it is necessary to amend the final MTP and/or TIP, the proposed change will be brought before the Citizen's Advisory Committee, Technical Coordinating Committee, and the Transportation Policy Committee. Citizens, stakeholders, federal, state, local partners, and committee members will adequate time for a public comment period. Also, the proposed change will be submitted to GDOT and FHWA for review. It will be classified as an Administrative Modification, an Amendment, or a Special Administrative Modification (SAM), if necessary. Administrative modifications may be deemed time-sensitive or urgent for other reasons and thus would be considered for processing as a SAM. At the request of the project sponsor, MPO staff will review the proposed project change for distribution as a SAM. Once the SAM has been reviewed, it is distributed, by email describing the change, to partner agencies and the project sponsor, including a copy of the updated TIP page. The SAM and updated TIP page will be posted to the MPO website after distribution. FHWA has the final rejection or acceptance for a project to be processed in this manner and should be consulted with before distribution of the SAM.

Administrative Modifications

The following actions are eligible as Administrative Modifications to the MTP/TIP:

- Revise a project description without changing the project scope, conflicting with the environmental document or changing the conformity finding in nonattainment and maintenance areas (less than 10% change in project termini according to GDOT). This change would not alter the original project intent
- Splitting or combining projects
- Federal funding category change
- Minor changes in expenditures for transit projects
- Roadway project phases may have a cost increase less than \$2,000,000 or 20% of the amount to be authorized
- Shifting projects within the TIP as long as the subsequent annual draft was submitted prior to September 30
- Projects may be funded from lump sum banks as long as they are consistent with category definitions

An Administrative Modification can be processed in accordance with these procedures provided:

- It does not impact financial constraint
- It does not require public review and comment
- If applicable, it does not affect the air quality conformity determination

Amendments to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

For alterations to a specific fiscal year UPWP related to the types of changes described in the TIP and MTP process:

Administrative modifications to the UPWP can be achieved by MPO staff coordinating with GDOT and the relevant Federal partner agency (i.e., FHWA or FTA);

Full amendments to the UPWP must be brought forward by MPO staff and approved by the Rome/Floyd Policy Committee, then submitted to GDOT and the relevant Federal partner agency (i.e., FHWA or FTA) for final approval.

All planning documents are readily available to the public through the use of printed materials, newsletters and the MPO website located at www.romefloyd.com.

SECTION V: GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) REGARDING THE PUBLIC INVOLVMENT PROCESS

1. The CAC will be a central actor in coordinating public involvement in the MPO planning process.
2. The CAC functions by providing information to the interested public regarding transportation plans and projects.
3. The CAC will participate in the review of social, economic, and environmental considerations that are essential for developing a viable transportation study for the area.
4. The CAC will assess public opinion relative to the transportation study's activities, with recommendations to the Technical Coordinating and Transportation Policy Committee.

SECTION VI: ROME/FLOYD COUNTY MPO TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

An up to date committee roster can be found on the MPO's webpage in the current UPWP:
<https://romefloyd.com/departments/Transportation>

Policy Committee Voting Members

Citizen's Advisory Committee Chair
Floyd County Commissioner (2)
Rome City Commissioner (2)
Cave Spring Mayor
Cave Spring Council Member (1)
Floyd County Manager
Rome City Manager
Rome/Floyd Co. Planning Commission Chair
District 6 Engineer, GDOT (or their designee)
GDOT Director of Planning (or GDOT Planning Designee)

Citizen's Transportation Committee Members

Floyd County Appointments (3)
City of Rome Appointments (3)
Director, Rome Transit Department
CAC Chairman

Technical Coordinating Committee Members

Assistant City Manager
City Public Works Director
City Engineer
Director, Rome Transit Department
Transportation Coordinator, Rome Transit Department
Public Works/Council Member, City of Cave Spring
County Public Works Director
Director of Community Development Department
County Engineer, Floyd County Public Works
Planning Director, Rome/Floyd County Planning Department
Transportation Planner, Rome/Floyd County Planning Department
Transportation Planner, Office of Planning, Atlanta
GDOT District 6 Planning and Programming Engineer, White District Office
GDOT Transit Program Manager, Office of Intermodal Programs, Atlanta
GDOT Area Engineer, Rome
Planning Director, NWGRC

Technical Coordinating Committee Non – Voting Members

GDOT Transit Planner, Office of Intermodal Programs

GDOT Branch Chief, Office of Planning (also non-voting member of the Policy Committee)

Vice-Chairman of Citizen’s Advisory Committee

Chairman, Transportation Committee, Rome Chamber of Commerce

Environmental and Urban Planning Engineer, Federal Highway Administration

APPENDIX A: USEFUL ACRONYMS

- 3C: Continuing, Comprehensive, Cooperative
- APA: American Planning Association
- APTA: American Public Transit Association
- CAC: Citizen's Advisory Committee
- CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
- EPA: Environmental Protection Agency
- FAST Act: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
- FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
- FRA: Federal Railroad Administration
- FTA: Federal Transit Administration
- GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation
- GIS: Graphic Information Systems
- HPMS: Highway Performance Monitoring System
- HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program
- ITS: Intelligent Transportation Systems
- LEP: Limited English Proficiency
- MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
- MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- NEPA: National Environmental Protection Act
- NWGRC: Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
- PC: Policy Committee
- PEL: Planning and Environmental Linkages
- PL: Planning Funds (Highway) Allocated for the MPO
- RFMPO: Rome/Floyd County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- RTD: Rome Transit Department
- RTP: Regional Transportation Plan
- SRTS: Safe Routes to School
- STIP: State Transportation Improvement Program
- TAZ: Traffic Analysis Zone
- TCC: Technical Coordinating Committee
- TDP: Transit Development Plan
- TE: Transportation Enhancement
- TIP: Transportation Improvement Program
- UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program

RESOLUTION
ADOPTION OF ROME-FLOYD MPO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the federal regulations promulgated under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, P.L. 112-141 (MAP-21) mandate that Metropolitan Planning Organizations have a Public Participation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Rome-Floyd County Metropolitan Planning Organization has been designated by the Governor of the State of Georgia as the body responsible for the transportation planning process for Floyd County and the municipalities within the County; and

WHEREAS, the Public Participation Plan lays out the methods by which the general public and affected agencies can have input into transportation planning for the community consistent with a comprehensive, continuous, and cooperative transportation planning process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rome-Floyd County Metropolitan Planning Organization does hereby adopt this Public Participation Plan.

Certified this 23rd day of September, 2020,



Allison Watters, Chairman Rome-Floyd County Policy Committee