

Rural Planning Work Program

For the Rural Transportation Planning Program

Fiscal Years 2017-18 and 2018-19

The Appalachian Council of Governments



Adopted Friday, June 23, 2017

The purpose of the RPWP is to identify work program tasks and present budget allocations for planning activities to be undertaken within the ACOG Study Area. The document also serves as the basis for federal (the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)), state (the SCDOT), and local funding assistance for transportation planning activities.

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WHAT IS THE ACOG?

The Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) is a voluntary organization of local governments in Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg Counties of Upstate South Carolina.

The organization began in 1965 as the Appalachian Advisory Commission, a 12-member board created to advise the Governor on the use of Appalachian Regional Commission funds.

Authorized by referendum, the Council of Governments system emerged in 1971. The ACOG has become a valuable resource for area local governments in the areas of public administration, planning, information systems and technology, grants, workforce development and services to the elderly population. Encouraged and facilitated through the Council of Governments, this marriage of intergovernmental and private sector cooperation continues as a critical element in the region's economy and quality of life.

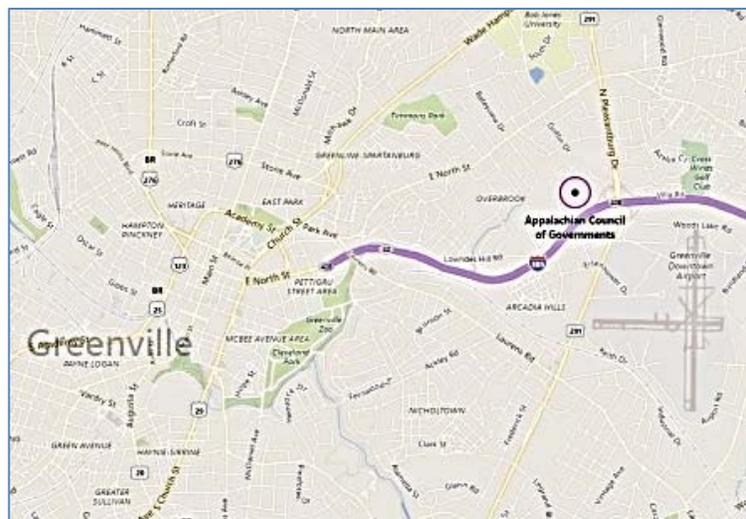
A 44-member Board of Directors sets policy for the Council of Governments. Two-thirds of the members are local elected officials, including state legislators, county council members, and mayors or city council members. County councils appoint the remaining citizen and minority members.

The Executive Director is responsible for the overall management of the Council of Governments. The director runs the day-to-day operations, and delegates specific responsibilities to department directors and staff.

ACOG's offices are located near the interchange of Interstate 385 and South Carolina Highway 291 (Pleasantburg Drive) on Century Circle.



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APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Rural Transportation Planning Work Program FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19

Introduction and Background

The South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) was formed in 1965 to provide technical support to local governments in the six Upstate counties of South Carolina in the areas of planning, administration, and grant services. The mission and goal of the ACOG, one of ten regional councils serving South Carolina, is to assist our region in planning for and achieving a greater quality of life and economic success for the benefit of our communities. Each of the six Upstate counties appoint members to the ACOG Board of Directors, which is comprised of legislative delegation members, county council members, mayors or city council members, citizens, and minority members.

One aspect of the ACOG's operation is its close relationship with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). In 1998, the SCDOT contracted with the ACOG and the nine other COG's in the state to coordinate transportation planning assistance for non-urbanized portions of the State. The SCDOT involved the COG's to decentralize the transportation planning process and to allow for more local involvement in project identification and development. This partnership between the SCDOT and the COGs aids the state in fulfilling the requirements of the federal and state planning process to address the transportation needs of non-metropolitan areas.

The SCDOT's long range planning and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) uses the COG's as conduits to prioritize system improvements in the rural portions of the state. As the designated planning agency for the Appalachian Region, the ACOG is responsible for maintenance and coordination of transportation plans for the rural/non-urbanized areas of the region, maintenance of financial records for the planning support funds, and forwarding local project recommendations to the SCDOT. The Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) outlines the ACOG's planned work regarding transportation planning for the next year in the Appalachian Region.

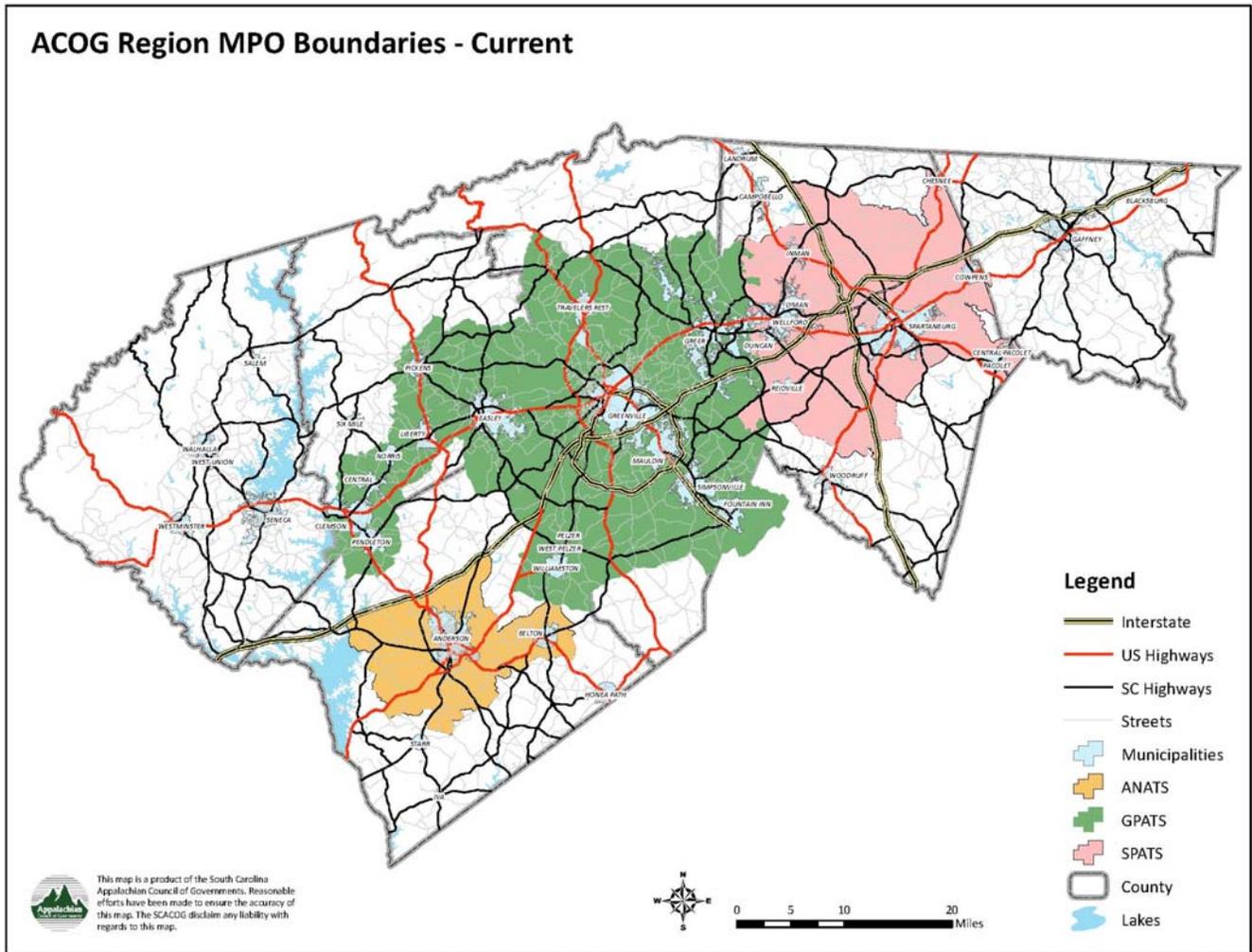
Rural Planning Work Program

The Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) for the Appalachian Region is developed annually and documents major transportation planning and related activities within the rural areas of the Appalachian Region for the upcoming two (2) fiscal years (July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2019). The purpose of the RPWP is to identify work program tasks and present budget allocations for planning activities to be undertaken within the ACOG Study Area. The document also serves as the basis for federal (the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)), state (the SCDOT), and local funding assistance for transportation planning activities.

The ACOG works closely with local government officials in all six counties of the ACOG Region and with the Anderson Area Transportation Study (ANATS), the Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS), and the Spartanburg Area Transportation Study (SPATS), the three MPO's in the Appalachian region, to coordinate transportation planning. By providing regional coordination amongst the planning partners and setting regional recommendations, cities and counties can better coordinate their planning

efforts in order to develop an integrated multimodal transportation system for the Appalachian Region and the State of South Carolina.

In addition to the work program elements outlined in this RPWP, work shall include additional activities as requested by the SCDOT. The scope of work may also include activities or studies addressing other transportation planning related issues of specific interest to the region. The map below identifies the current study area boundaries of the three MPO's in the region with the remaining areas designated for coordination by the Council of Governments.



General Functions

The ACOG also recognizes the requirements established by FHWA regarding the national transportation planning priorities included in the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) and National Highway System legislation should also be considered for use in the non-urbanized areas. Planning efforts will emphasize the ten planning factor requirements of the FAST Act as listed below:

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;
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.

The FAST Act has a new focus on a performance based approach. The rural transportation planning process shall provide for the establishment and use of a performance-based approach to transportation decision-making to support the nation goals. The ACOG will coordinate with SCDOT, FHWA and other relevant organizations in an effort to establish performance targets that address the performance measures described in section 150(c), where applicable, to use in tracking progress towards attainment of critical outcomes for the region. National goals are:

1. Safety – To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads;
2. Infrastructure condition – To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair;
3. Congestion reduction – To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System;
4. System reliability – To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system;
5. Freight movement and economic vitality – To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development;
6. Environmental sustainability – To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment; and
7. Reduced project delivery delays – To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.

Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) Elements

I. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

A. Rural Transportation Program Management

Description: This activity includes administrative support activities required to prepare and administer the RPWP and manage the overall transportation planning process. This includes initiating and properly managing the transportation planning process, ensuring that it is continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive, and in compliance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations. This includes the completion of necessary contracts, invoices, progress reports, correspondence, grant applications in support of the work program, and meeting coordination and attendance.

Methodology:

- Acts as local liaison to the FHWA, the FTA, the SCDOT and other transportation related agencies to ensure coordination.
- Attend the SCDOT, the FHWA, and the FTA training sessions and other necessary workshops and meetings.
- Provide administrative support and technical assistance to the ACOG Board and Executive Committee, the Rural Planning Committee, as well as other permanent and ad-hoc committees, as needed.
- Provide funds for the purchase and maintenance of computer hardware and software to support the ACOG transportation planning program and related activities, including network maintenance.
- Maintain the current RPWP, and develop a subsequent work program.
- Preparation of quarterly and annual financial progress reports, invoices, and correspondence.
- Develop grant applications and proposals as needed.

II. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A. Data Collection Activities for Regional Travel Demand Modeling

Description: This task will include working with the SCDOT in an effort to maintain a comprehensive travel demand model for the Appalachian Region. By having this capability, the ACOG staff can work with local jurisdictions and the SCDOT in identifying problem areas and analyze alternative highway improvements in the region.

Methodology: An on-going effort to assist the SCDOT in maintaining the Appalachian Regional Travel Demand Model and incorporating data into transportation planning products.

- Continued update to GIS traffic count database.
- Continued collection and analysis of census data and other socio-economic data for updates to the Long Range Plan for the Appalachian Region and the regional travel model.
- Continued coordination with member agencies and MPO's to ensure that the most recent data is being used.

- Analysis of the travel demand model, including model calibration, trip generation and distribution, and Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) data analysis.

B. Long Range Transportation Planning and Transportation Improvement Program

Description: This task will include working with the SCDOT, local and regional government representatives, and the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee to maintain the adopted the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Appalachian Region. The plan is the long-range strategy and capital improvement program developed to guide the effective investment of public funds in multi-modal transportation facilities. The LRTP provides the context from which the region's Rural Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), a short-range capital improvement program for implementing highway, transit, and bikeway projects, is drawn. This task also includes ongoing maintenance (including updates, transmittals, etc.) needed for a functional and updated RTIP. Activities for this project will also ensure that the RTIP is in compliance with all federal and state requirements.

Methodology: This is an on-going effort to incorporate data into long range transportation planning. While the current LRTP was adopted in June 2016, proactive efforts are necessary to lay the framework for the five-year update that will commence in FY 2019-20. One proactive effort will include working to identify potential projects using input from local governments, the SCDOT, FHWA, MPOs as well as needs identified through public outreach and the Regional Travel Demand Model(s). The Statewide Multimodal Plan will also be used as a resource for implementing initiatives from the LRTP. RTIP maintenance is included as part of this task and will be reviewed and approved by the RTAC in compliance with the SCDOT Commission policies. Additional proactive planning measures to be used as part of LRTP maintenance include:

- Updates to demographic, socio-economic, and land use information to support continued development and maintenance of long range strategies for LRTP.
- Updated list for potential construction projects including road widening, resurfacing, new alignments, intersection improvements, safety improvements, sidewalks and bikeways.
- Identification of possible local needs studies and plans.
- Meetings with local government representatives including administrators, elected officials, planners and economic developers.
- Enhanced public participation through dissemination of information, and receipt of public comments.

C. Transit Planning

Description: Be a facilitator of regional collaboration, cooperation, and coordination as applicable.

Methodology: The SCDOT shall maintain the administrative and oversight functions the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 program administered by the SCDOT. The following are focus areas related to transit initiatives that are established to enhance regional public and specialized transit efficiency and effectiveness:

- Assist SCDOT in improving communication and cooperation among regional transportation providers;

- Assist public and human service agencies in assessing gaps and barriers in transportation delivery for general public and disadvantaged groups in the region;
- Assist in regional transportation planning efforts including the assessment of mobility needs, economic development related to multimodal planning, and identification of other partnership and funding resources;
- Assist in regional advocacy of public and human service transportation services;
- Facilitate and foster the opportunity for stakeholder meetings related to coordination of transit services (e.g., Study Teams, Coordination Council and public meetings);
- Facilitate coordination of local human service transportation funding requests:
 - Assist the SCDOT in the dissemination of announcements and application packages within the region of responsibility;
 - Accept completed applications and prioritize applications;
 - Submit to the SCDOT Office of Public Transit a prioritized list of recommended projects for final review and funding recommendations;
 - The SCDOT will enter into contract agreements directly with the subrecipients as approved by the Commission.
 - The SCDOT Office of Public Transit is responsible for reviewing regional priority list and, making final recommendation on award.
 - Each year, the SCDOT will determine the appropriate funding level for COGs for administrative purposes.
- Submitting a UPWP or RPWP as required to the SCDOT for review and approval prior to disbursement of planning or administrative funds;
- Periodic evaluation and update of the regional coordination or transit plan, and provide input to the SCDOT for updating regional and statewide coordination.
- Develop long-range transportation plan which will include transit projects using funds provided through the Planning Office.

D. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Management

Description: This activity will involve soliciting, evaluating, and developing applications for the Transportation Alternatives (TAP) Program as appropriate.

Methodology: The ACOG will continue to assist eligible applicants with project scope definition and the preparation of applications as needed.

E. Technical Assistance and Intergovernmental Coordination

Description: Continue on-going efforts to consult local elected officials and regional groups on a regular basis concerning transportation. Informal discussions are also held very frequently to discuss transportation needs and foster intergovernmental/interagency coordination. Serve as liaison between the ACOG and member governments, the ANATS, the GPATS and the SPATS MPO's, Federal, State and Local agencies. These efforts are intended to foster intergovernmental/interagency coordination to

ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach to transportation planning and programming in the region.

Methodology:

- The ACOG will continue to attend the ANATS, the GPATS, and the SPATS MPO meetings to ensure representation of rural interests in regional efforts as appropriate.
- The ACOG staff will partner with the GPATS MPO and the Central Midlands COG to develop a statewide MPO/COG TIP Modification Policy in accordance with the existing SCDOT STIP Modification Procedures.
- The ACOG will continue to participate in regional transportation and air quality related initiatives as deemed appropriate and beneficial to the Appalachian Region including serving on committees for the Clean Air Upstate initiative.
- The ACOG will continue to coordinate activities between the ANATS, the GPATS, and the SPATS MPO's activities as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the three entities to encourage regular cooperation and coordination of activities.
- As a result of regional discussions and public participation from the LRTP, a need for a specific and detailed regional freight plan was established. As a result, the ACOG will pursue an effort to develop an Upstate Regional Freight Analysis Plan. The ACOG will coordinate planning activities with freight stakeholders, regional municipal and county governments, and the three regional MPO's.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A. Implementation of the Public Participation Plan

Description: This task generally covers the dissemination of information to the public about the transportation planning program. It includes working with the SCDOT and local governments to implement a public involvement plan covering actions related to the long-range plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan. It also covers receiving public comment and input on transportation planning activities through public information meetings both hosted and attended by the ACOG.

Methodology: As federal requirements stipulate opportunities for public input, the ACOG and the SCDOT have partnered in the past to host public hearings in affected communities. The ACOG will craft a plan that will guide the public involvement process in planning for transportation projects in the Appalachian Region. Special attention will be given to groups not usually participating in the transportation planning process or under-served populations.

Techniques for the dissemination of information include, but are not limited to the following:

- Newsletters;
- Study reports and technical memoranda;
- Public information meetings/workshops and conferences;
- Direct contact with public/citizens mailing lists;
- The ACOG website (www.scacog.org).

Public participation opportunities (public input) include:

- Public meetings/workshops;
- Task Forces, focus groups;
- Surveys, questionnaires, comment cards, etc.

IV. ACOG BUDGET SUMMARY

In FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19, the SCDOT will contract with the ACOG for transportation planning services in the amount of \$170,000, with a 20% local match required. This includes \$20,000 that the Office of Public Transit has transferred from FTA Section 5304 to the State Planning and Research Program (SPR) in support of the SCACOG regional transit coordination activities. This produces a total two (2) year project budget of \$212,500. The budget for the FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19 work programs by planning element is as follows:

ACOG FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19 Transportation Budget				
Work Plan Element	SCDOT	Local Match	Total	Percent of Budget*
I. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION	\$32,000	\$8,000	\$40,000	18.8%
II. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE				
A. Data Collection Activities for Regional Travel Demand Modeling	\$16,000	\$4,000	\$20,000	9.4%
B. Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program	\$32,000	\$8,000	\$40,000	18.8%
C. Transit Planning	\$16,000	\$4,000	\$20,000	9.4%
D. Transportation Alternatives Program Management	\$16,000	\$4,000	\$20,000	9.4%
E. Technical Assistance and Intergovernmental Coordination	\$48,000	\$12,000	\$60,000	28.2%
III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	\$10,000	\$2,500	\$12,500	5.9%
Total	\$170,000	\$42,500	\$212,500	100.0%

*Individual values are rounded and may not total 100%