

Prospectus
for
Continuing Transportation Planning
for the
**Mecklenburg-Union
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Prepared by: Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization
North Carolina Department of Transportation - Statewide Planning Branch

In cooperation with the:

County of Mecklenburg
County of Union
City of Charlotte
Town of Cornelius
Town of Davidson
Town of Huntersville
Town of Indian Trail
Town of Matthews
Town of Mint Hill
Town of Pineville
Town of Stallings
Town of Weddington
North Carolina Department of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation

Approved by Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization
November 20, 2002

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Municipalities of Charlotte, Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, Pineville, Indian Trail, Stallings, Weddington, Mecklenburg County, Union County, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the various administrations within the U.S. Department of Transportation, participate in a continuing transportation planning process in the **Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO)** Urban Area as required by Section 134 (a), Title 23, United States Code. A Memorandum of Understanding approved by the municipalities, the counties, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation establishes the general operating procedures and responsibilities by which short-range and long-range transportation plans are developed and continuously evaluated. Furthermore, any entities that join the MUMPO will participate likewise upon becoming members.

The Prospectus contained herein is primarily a reference document for the transportation planning staff. Its purpose is to provide sufficiently detailed descriptions of work tasks so that staff and agencies responsible for doing the work understand what needs to be done, how it is to be done, and who does it.

A secondary purpose of the Prospectus is to provide sufficient documentation of planning work tasks and the planning organization and procedures so that documentation is minimized in a required annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP identifies the planning work tasks that are to be accomplished in the upcoming fiscal year and serves as a funding document for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process in the **MUMPO** Urban Area. The MPO is an organization consisting of the representatives of general-purpose local government; the North Carolina Department of Transportation; a Technical Coordinating Committee; and the various agencies and units of local and State government participating in transportation planning for the area.

The respective governing boards (the City Council or County Board of Commissioners) make policy decisions for local agencies of government. The Board of Transportation makes policy decisions for the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The municipal governing boards and the N.C. Department of Transportation have implementation authority for construction, improvement, and maintenance of streets and highways.

The Memorandum of Understanding established an MPO composed of representatives from the policy boards to provide policy direction for the planning process, and to improve communications and coordination between the several Policy Boards. The MPO is responsible for (1) review and approval of the UPWP; (2) review and approval of the area's Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) which ensures coordination between local and State programs; (3) review of the National Highway System, review and approval of changes to the Functional Classification Designation (as it pertains to the Surface Transportation Program) and review and approval of the Metropolitan Area Boundary; (4) endorsement, review, and approval

of the Prospectus; (5) guidance on transportation goals and objectives; and (6) review and approval of changes to the adopted Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). As required by North Carolina General Statutes 136-66.2, revisions to the Transportation Plan must be jointly approved by the local governing boards and the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

A Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), also established by the Memorandum of Understanding, is responsible for supervision, guidance, and coordination of the continuing planning process, and for making recommendations to the local and State governmental agencies and the MUMPO regarding any necessary action. The TCC is also responsible for review of the National Highway System and for development, review, and recommendation for approval of the Prospectus, UPWP, TIP, Functional Classification Designation (as it pertains to the Surface Transportation Program), Metropolitan Area Boundary revisions, and technical reports of the transportation study. The membership of the TCC consists of, but is not limited to, key staff from the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, the counties, transit operators, and the municipalities.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission is designated as the Lead Planning Agency (LPA) and is primarily responsible for annual preparation of the Unified Planning Work Program and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program. The City of Charlotte is the primary local recipient of planning funds received from USDOT for the **MUMPO** Urban Area.

Transportation planning work is divided into five elements in the Prospectus according to type of activity:

- Continuing Transportation Planning, Chapter II
- Travel Demand Model, Chapter III
- Long Range Transportation Planning, Chapter IV
- Continuing Programs, Chapter V
- Administration, Chapter VI

Citizen participation is an important element of the transportation planning process and is achieved by making study documents and information available to the public and by actively seeking citizen participation during the planning process. Involvement is sought through such techniques as goals and objective surveys, neighborhood forums, drop-in centers, workshops, seminars, and public hearings. Elected or appointed city and town representatives and municipal and county planning boards should serve as primary sources in gaining public understanding and support for the transportation planning activity.

An organization chart for continuing transportation planning for the **MUMPO** Urban Area is shown in Figure 1. The history and status of transportation planning is given in Appendix A. The following are contact agencies for information concerning the transportation planning process in MUMPO Urban Area.

Contacts:

MUMPO Urban Area Contact Person
Transportation Program Manager
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission
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Charlotte, NC 28204
Telephone 704-336-2205
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MUMPO Urban Area Coordinator
Statewide Planning Branch
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Raleigh, NC 27699-1554
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NCDOT Division 10 Engineer
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Albemarle, North Carolina 28001
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II. CONTINUING TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The continuing transportation planning work tasks are described here. A number of conditions generally need to be continuously surveyed and compiled annually to determine whether previous projections are still valid or whether plan assumptions need to be changed. Surveillance tasks are described in the following sections and agency responsibilities are listed in Appendix D.

1. Traffic Volume Counts

Annual Average Weekday Traffic (AAWT) will be estimated on a biennial schedule at specified locations on each segment of the principal arterial, minor arterial, and collector street systems inside the transportation study area. Traffic data will be collected on weekdays for a minimum of 48 hours. Axle counts will be converted to volume counts using adjustment ratios that account for multiple-axle vehicles. Volume counts will be seasonally adjusted and averaged to generate AAWT estimates. These estimates will be evaluated for temporal and spatial consistency. Factors for seasonal adjustment will be based on traffic data from permanent traffic monitoring stations located at typical settings throughout the urban area.

The Charlotte Department of Transportation (**CDOT**) is responsible for obtaining counts at specified locations on the City of Charlotte municipal street system and for furnishing the raw daily traffic counts, count information, and location maps to the Statewide Planning Branch the first week of November each scheduled collection year. The Statewide Planning Branch is responsible for obtaining counts at specified locations on other segments of the major street system, for updating the count location map biannually to reflect any changes made in the major street system, for preparing the Annual Average Daily Traffic Volume Map, and for sending this information to the MPO.

Special counts may be taken to support updates or validations of the travel model, or to support the MUMPO congestion monitoring system. These include counts at screen-line stations, external stations, major trip generators, and key intersections as needed. Traffic count types may include daily, hourly, vehicle classification, or turning movements.

2. Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT)

Vehicle miles of travel are computed by multiplying the length of each link times the annual average daily traffic volume on that link. Vehicle miles of travel are tabulated annually by county and functional classification by SWP-Road Inventory Section. These VMT estimates are used by DAQ for air quality monitoring. MUMPO may also choose to estimate VMT for the urban area on a regular basis.

3. Street System Changes

Records on improvements to the state highway system, whether planned, underway, or completed, are maintained by the Division Engineer of the NCDOT. Each municipality should maintain similar records for its municipal street system. The municipalities participating in the Powell Bill Program must certify city street mileage maintained annually.

An inventory of the geometrics and signalization of the existing major street system for the planning area should be maintained by the MPO. Periodically or as changes or additions to the major street system occur, the inventory may be updated. This inventory will need to be current when the travel model is periodically updated. Typically, this information is stored and updated in a Geographic Information System (GIS).

4. Traffic Accidents

North Carolina law requires that any traffic accident involving personal injury and/or property damage in excess of \$1000.00 be reported in detail to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) of the NCDOT. The DMV also receives a detailed report on any accident investigated by a law officer. Copies of all these reports are forwarded to the Traffic Engineering Branch of the Division of Highways, where the information is summarized and stored. Annual analyses will compare each year's high accident locations to previous years' high accident locations.

The Traffic Engineering Branch will provide the Annual Highway Safety Program Listing Report on request.

5. Transit System Data

Items to be considered are transit patronage, route changes, service miles, load factor, route ridership changes, boarding and alighting counts, headways, frequency, and service hours.

6. Dwelling Unit, Population, and Employment Changes

Changes in population and development across the service area will be identified and evaluated to determine necessary restructuring of transportation services to meet current and forecasted demand. Census data, local parcel, zoning, and tax data records; Employment Security Commission; and private vendors are acceptable sources of information for this purpose. This item may include the development and maintenance of a GIS database.

7. Air Travel

Data may be collected and analyzed to determine influence of local air travel on the area's transportation system and identify needs for additional services. Airport entrance traffic counts would help relate air travel to ground travel in future updates.

8. Vehicle Occupancy Rates (Counts)

Vehicle occupancy counts are collected annually in the Central Business District (CBD) and as needed throughout the MPO. These counts will be used to comply with the Clean Air Act and are useful in the trip generation process of travel demand model development, and for other tasks of the LRTP.

9. Travel Time Studies

Peak and off-peak travel time studies may be conducted for those street segments that are included in the Congestion Management System. The travel time studies may be required during the travel model calibration phase as well.

10. GIS Analysis and Mapping

The CDOT is responsible for the design, development and ongoing maintenance of a Geographic Information System (GIS) for the collected data needed for the MPO. Tasks also include spatial data analyses of the MUMPO urban area for the preparation of the LRTP and other issues/decisions that affect the MUMPO urban area; preparation, maintenance, and distribution of the official thoroughfare plan and other maps/data contained in the LRTP.

11. Parking Inventory

Inventories of both on- and off-street parking supply in the Charlotte CBD area are maintained by the **CDOT**. Periodic updates and inventories of other parking facilities in other areas will be performed as determined by the MPO through the development of the Unified Planning Work Program.

12. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Inventory

An inventory of significant municipal, state, and federal bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities shall be maintained. These systems shall be incorporated in the LRTP update and analyzed in conjunction with other transportation performance measures.

III. TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL

In order to update the LRTP Plan and perform air quality analysis the MPO must prepare a travel demand model for the area. This is a significant task to develop and maintain. Considerable effort is required to collect data to input into the model. Additionally, substantial time is dedicated to evaluating accuracy.

MUMPO is partnering with the Cabarrus - South Rowan MPO, the Gaston MPO, the Rock Hill - Fort Mill MPO, NCDOT, and SCDOT to develop a state of the practice regional travel demand model. A future model agreement (model specifications) will detail the structure of this model.

1. Collection of Base Year Data

Collection of the following variables for existing conditions, by traffic zone, is required: (1) population; (2) housing units; and (3) employment. It is expected that re-projection of travel patterns, including transit, would require a re-tabulation of these factors used in developing the travel models. A GIS database may be used to maintain housing and land use information. The MPO will normally be responsible for providing socioeconomic data in spreadsheet format to the CDOT model team.

2. Collection of Network Data

Collection of the following variables describing the existing street system is necessary to build a base network for the travel model: 1) posted speed limit; 2) width/lanes; 3) segment length; 4) traffic signal locations. These items are generally the standard parameters required, but others may be needed as models become more sophisticated. The network development process is included in this task item.

3. Travel Model Updates

Typically, travel models use the following steps:

- a. Trip Generation – This step generally involves analysis of actual and projected socioeconomic data including, but not limited to, population, dwelling units, and employment. Based on these and other factors, an approximation of the number of trips generated by sub-area or zone can be determined.
- b. Trip Distribution - Using formulas based on the gravity model, an approximation of where the specific generated trips are beginning and ending is determined.
- c. Modal Split – This step is an analysis of mode chosen and factors that lead to those choices. Factors could include actual and perceived travel times, actual and perceived travel costs, as well as availability or convenience of certain modes.
- d. Trip Assignment - This step loads trips onto the network based on the paths selected for the origins and destinations from above. The effects of congestion and the somewhat random nature of travelers can be taken into account through loading techniques such as incremental restraint, equilibrium, stochastic or all-or-nothing assignments.

- e. Accuracy Checks – Checks involve comparing or calibrating mathematically generated data to actual field conditions. These typically involve screenline crossings to within 5% and link volumes to within 10% of ground counts.

4. Travel Surveys

These surveys may be implemented to attain such items as origins and destinations, travel behavior, transit ridership, commercial vehicle usage, workplace commuting, freight movement, etc. Therefore, these surveys may be home interviews, cordon O/Ds, and on-board transit to name a few.

New surveys will be conducted at such time as is necessary for the reevaluation of travel models. Because these surveys are very cost prohibitive, the survey responsibility and funding sources will be determined at the onset of the study.

5. Forecast of Data to Horizon Year

The travel models determine what planning data must be projected to a new design year. In general, the procedure will be to project population and socio-economic factors independently on an area wide basis, to cross check these projections and convert them to land use quantities if required, and to distribute the projected planning data to traffic zones on the basis of land capabilities, accessibility, and community goals as implemented through land use controls. The MPO will provide the approved socioeconomic forecasts to the CDOT model team.

6. Forecasts of Future Travel Patterns

The forecast of future travel patterns will result from using the forecasted planning data as input to the travel forecast models. The models are sensitive to changes in trip generation, trip purpose, trip length, vehicle occupancy, travel mode, and patterns of daily travel. The forecast of travel patterns will include a review of these factors and comparison to community goals and objectives to determine if changes in assumptions are warranted.

7. Capacity Deficiency Analysis

A system planning level capacity deficiency analysis will be made to determine existing and projected street deficiencies. Link capacities will be calculated in accordance with procedures based on the latest edition of the HIGHWAY CAPACITY MANUAL, Special Report 209, Highway Research Board, National Academy of Sciences, National Research Board.

IV. Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Federal Law (as updated by TEA-21) and USDOT's Metropolitan Planning Regulations, require MPOs to have a LRTP that is multi-modal, is financially constrained, has a minimum 20 year horizon, adheres to the MPO's adopted public involvement policy, has growth forecasts consistent with latest local land use plan, and is approved by the MPO. In air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas, the LRTP must be updated and proven to conform with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) every 3 years. The physical product of this LRTP will be in one or more assembled documents containing all plan elements and will be the responsibility of the MPO.

Evaluation of the overall LRTP should be undertaken at such time that the surveillance items indicate that travel or land development trends have begun to deviate significantly from forecasts or at such time that new data are required for facility design.

For non-attainment or maintenance areas, the LRTP must conform to the intent of the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The MPO is responsible for the analysis of all elements of a multi-modal transportation plan to ensure that they conform to the intent of the State Implementation Plan. Specifically, any LRTP revisions must be analyzed for conformity with the SIP.

Many aspects of the transit plan cannot be separated completely from other elements of the LRTP. HOV facilities, and even ridesharing and surface bus routes, may need to be addressed in both the transit and the Thoroughfare Plans. Since transit use depends heavily on land use characteristics and pedestrian accessibility, creating a "mode neutral" model and plan requires special attention to transportation/land use interactions. Realistic assumptions are needed concerning potential travel markets and the likely degree to which existing land use, travel behavior, and pricing policies can be influenced. All plans should be carefully analyzed for internal consistency, uncertainty, and sensitivity to assumptions and errors.

TEA-21 stresses "seven planning factors" that should be considered by the MPOs to guide the development of the LRTP. They are:

- Support the economic vitality of the community, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency;
- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operations; and
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

The TCC prepares recommendations for work required for plan reappraisal for review and approval by the MUMPO. Agency responsibilities for various work tasks in the LRTP evaluation elements are given in Appendix D. The following work elements may be required depending upon the depth of the studies needed.

1. Community Goals and Objectives

In the evaluation of community goals and objectives, the MPO will formulate policies ensuring local goals and objectives are discerned and addressed during the development and implementation of the LRTP.

2. Highway Element of the LRTP

The Thoroughfare Plan (a subset of which is the highway element of the LRTP) will be evaluated in terms of projected travel, capacity deficiencies, travel safety, physical conditions, costs, design, travel time, and possible disruption of people, businesses, neighborhoods, community facilities, and the environment. The evaluation will include an analysis of the LRTP and the interrelationship between alternative travel modes. Thoroughfare recommendations should include adequate right-of-way for improvements consistent with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, Transit Plan and other intermodal connection facilities along logical corridors. If major deficiencies are found with the existing plan, alternative plans will be evaluated. It should be noted that any regionally significant Thoroughfare Plan revisions must be analyzed for conformity with the SIP in non-attainment/maintenance areas. Alternatives that may be considered include (1) a Do-Nothing Alternative, (2) Alternative Modes, (3) Travel Demand Management, and (4) Alternative Design: Types and Standards.

3. Transit Element of the LRTP

Transit planning incorporates all vehicular modes other than trucks and the single occupant automobile, including (but not limited to) fixed-route bus service, ridesharing, fixed-guideway transit, and demand responsive transit. The transit plan describes existing transit service and unmet needs, and identifies any additional potential markets. New types, and areas of service may be recommended, supported by ridership forecasts and other analyses. Assumptions and implications related to land use, travel behavior, parking policies and other variables are clearly defined. Establishing objective measures of effectiveness is critical for evaluating transit alternatives. Measures of transit effectiveness include both the reduction of auto use and congestion, and the broadening of mobility options.

4. Bicycle and Pedestrian Element of LRTP

A bikeway and pedestrian plan is an essential part of the multi-modal LRTP for an urban area. The report entitled Incorporating Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements into Transportation Plans, produced by the Statewide Planning Branch, describes the essentials of this task. At a minimum, an update to the inventory of existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian elements should be included in the LRTP.

5. Airport/Air Travel Element of LRTP

The Airport Master Plan may be coordinated with the MPO (where feasible), and be an element of the LRTP.

6. Collector Street Element of LRTP

Collector street planning will be conducted as required to develop standards and preliminary locations for collector streets in advance of development. The objective of this planning activity is to ensure optimum traffic operations for the developing street system and transit accessibility to developing areas.

7. Rail Element of the LRTP

Documentation of passenger rail plans is included in the LRTP.

8. Freight Movement/Mobility Planning

As one of the TEA-21's seven planning factors, emphasis is placed on increasing accessibility and mobility options available to people and freight. Tasks included in this category may be a survey of freight carriers, recommendations for improving truck mobility or train/truck intermodal movements, and identifying acceptable truck routes.

9. Financial Planning

As required by TEA-21, the LRTP must be fiscally constrained. Project cost estimates and revenue forecasts are required. Federal regulations allow flexibility in the methodologies used for analysis, but they must include estimates for maintenance as well as construction. This item also covers identifying new and alternative funding sources, including new taxing strategies, impact fees, and public-private partnerships.

V. CONTINUING PROGRAMS

Federal guidelines, most recently reinforced by TEA-21, emphasize the need for continuous transportation planning. The following elements are procedures necessary to ensure effective operation and maintenance of planning needs for the MPO.

1. Congestion Management Strategies

The 3-C Transportation Planning Process, as enhanced by TEA-21, stresses efficient system management and operations. Planning for congestion management strategies such as these below are included in this item.

- a. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
- b. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)
- c. High Occupancy Vehicle lanes or priorities (HOV)
- d. Access Control and Management
- e. Traffic Operations Improvements, Incident Management
- f. Growth Management

This item covers the costs associated with planning for these items, coordination with public and private stakeholders, and marketing or public education.

2. Air Quality Planning/Conformity Analysis

The transportation sector is a key participant in the development and application of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality. MPOs have the responsibility to make a determination as to whether or not transportation plans, programs, and projects conform to the intent of the SIP. Tasks involved in this pursuit include, but are not limited to:

- a. Participation in interagency consultation process as part of SIP development and conformity determination development
- b. Providing assistance to NCDENR in developing and maintaining mobile source emission inventories,
- c. Participating in development of TCMs for the SIP
- d. Implementation of TCMs as appropriate
- e. Performing analysis and approving conformity determination* as required.

*MPO must approve conformity determination

3. Unified Planning Work Program

A Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) will be prepared annually by the Lead Planning Agency in cooperation with other participating agencies and under the guidance of the Technical Coordinating Committee. The UPWP will present the proposed planning work program for the next year and review the recent

accomplishments of the planning process. The UPWP will be cross-referenced to the Prospectus to minimize repetitive documentation. The UPWP will be reviewed and approved by the MPO, by the State and Regional intergovernmental review process, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, and Federal agencies providing planning funds for continuing transportation planning. These Federal planning funds are provided by FHWA (Section 104(f)) and FTA (Section 5303). Preparation of a Section 5303 Grant application is also required in addition to the UPWP to receive planning funds from FTA.

The MPO must certify their 3-C Transportation Planning Process annually as part of the UPWP adoption.

4. Transportation Improvement Program

The Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) shall have two parts: (1) a metropolitan programming document which is coordinated with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and (2) a list of prioritized needs.

Prepared every two years, the local programming document shall be a short range, three to seven-year multi-modal program which identifies transportation improvements recommended for advancement during the program period, identifies priorities, groups improvements into staging periods, includes estimated costs and revenues, and is fiscally constrained.

The MPO Priority Needs List is developed biennially to communicate the MPO's priorities regarding the funding schedule on already programmed projects, the acceleration of long term projects into the program, and the addition of new projects to the STIP. The List may include cost estimates, purpose and need statements, and other supporting materials. The Priority Needs List is a key step in cooperative TIP development between the MPO, the transit operator, and NCDOT.

VI. ADMINISTRATION

The remaining sections are Civil Rights and Regulatory Compliance, Incidental Planning and Project Development, and Management and Operations. Agency responsibilities for administrative work tasks are given in Appendix D.

1. Title VI

Provide update of Civil Rights statistics report for submittal to FTA to determine MPO compliance to civil rights provisions. Title VI states: The MPO shall comply with all the requirements imposed by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252), 49 U.S.C. 2000D TO 2000-D-4; the Regulations of DOT issued thereafter in the Code of Federal Regulations (commonly and herein referred to as CFR) Title 49, Subtitle A, Part 21), and the assurance by the MPO pursuant thereto.

2. Environmental Justice

Executive Order (E. O.) 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations, requires all Federal agencies to identify and address Title VI and Environmental Justice requirements. Recipients of federal funds, including NCDOT and the MPOs, must assure compliance with these requirements. As mandated by the FHWA, planning activities should focus on complying with E. O. 12898 and the three basic principles of Environmental Justice as follows:

- a. ensure public involvement of low-income and minority groups in decision making;
- b. prevent disproportionately high and adverse impacts to low-income and minority groups resulting from decisions made; and
- c. assure low-income and minority groups receive a proportionate share of benefits resulting from decisions made.

3. Minority Business Enterprise Planning (MBE)

There is a continuing need to address the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) as a part of the planning and programming phases of project development. Areas are encouraged to give full consideration to the potential services that could be provided by MBEs in the development of transit plans and programs, and the provision of transit service. Transit properties with established MBE programs are encouraged to work with MPOs, utilizing transportation planning funds to update existing MBE programs as necessary.

4. Planning for the Elderly and Disabled

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) ensures that persons with disabilities enjoy access to the mainstream of American life. The ADA expands on the Section 504 program to comprehensively address mobility needs of persons with disabilities.

Joint FHWA and FTA regulations require that the urban transportation planning process include activities specifically emphasizing the planning, development, evaluation and reevaluation of transportation facilities and services for the elderly and disabled, consistent with ADA. This process should include an analysis of inventories of disabled persons, their locations, and special transportation services needed. These regulations emphasize estimation of travel needs through statistical analysis and a self-identification process.

Both thoroughfare and transit planning activities should focus on complying with the key provisions of the ADA, and include special efforts to plan transportation facilities and services that can be effectively utilized by persons with limited mobility, such as:

- a. Public transit authorities providing fixed route transit service must provide comparable level paratransit service to disabled individuals who cannot otherwise use the fixed route service;
- b. Transit authorities providing elderly and disabled oriented demand responsive service must also buy or lease accessible vehicles unless it can be demonstrated that the system provides a level of service to the disabled equivalent to that provided to the general public; and
- c. New facilities built must be accessible and existing facilities with major alterations must be made accessible to the maximum extent feasible.
- d. Planning for better mobility through such items as wheelchair curb cuts, longer pedestrian crosswalk times at certain intersections, and special parking spaces and rates for cars with one or more transportation disadvantaged occupant(s).

5. Safety/Drug Control Planning

MPOs may pass planning funds through to transit operators for use in performing safety audits and in the resultant development of safety/ security improvement and in alcohol/drug control planning, programming, and implementation. Attention should be given to the development of policies and planning for the proper safety related maintenance of transit vehicles, fire safety, substance abuse where it affects employee performance in critical safety related jobs, emergency preparedness to improve the capability to respond to transit accidents/incidents, security to reduce theft and vandalism of transit property and to counter potential politically motivated terrorism directed against transit users, facilities, and equipment.

6. Public Involvement

An effective public involvement process provides for an open exchange of information and ideas between the public and transportation decision-makers. The overall objective of an area's public involvement process is that it be proactive, provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement (23CFR450.212(a) and 450.316(b)(1)). It also provides mechanisms for the agency or agencies to solicit public comments and ideas, identify circumstances and impacts which may not have been known or anticipated by

public agencies, and, by doing so, to build support among the public who are stakeholders in transportation investments which impact their communities. The MUMPO plan is shown in Appendix C.

7. Private Sector Participation

Federal regulations require that private operators be afforded the "maximum feasible opportunity" to participate in the planning and provision of local transportation services. The purpose of the private sector participation requirement is to give private operators the opportunity to initiate involvement. In an effort to more effectively address this requirement, the evaluation of private sector service alternatives has been incorporated into the transportation planning process.

The general criteria for making public/private service decisions may include but is not limited to:

- a. comparative cost of private versus public services in similar situations;
- b. perceived quality and reliability of service;
- c. local control of services;
- d. responsiveness and flexibility of operators; and
- e. private operator financial stability.

8. Transportation Enhancement Planning

This category of federal funding began with ISTEA and was carried through in TEA-21 legislation. MPO assistance to applicants, review of applications, and preparing endorsements is included under this item. The MPO shall approve all proposed enhancement projects for inclusion in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) prior to being forwarded to NCDOT for consideration of inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Sponsoring agencies must submit completed application packages to the NCDOT for consideration by the Transportation Enhancement Committee.

9. Environmental Analysis and Pre-TIP Planning

The proposed Transportation Plan and selected alternative plans will be evaluated based on criteria established by the goals and objectives reevaluation study and impact on the environment. It is anticipated that the evaluation will be in the following areas: efficiency in serving travel demands; energy conservation; cost; and impact on the physical, social, and economic environment. The physical environmental evaluation will include air quality, water quality, soils and geology, wildlife and vegetation. The social environmental considerations will include housing and community cohesion, low-income and minority populations, noise, churches and educational facilities, parks and recreational facilities, historic sites, public health and safety, national defense, and aesthetics. Effects on business, employment and income, land development patterns, and

public utilities will be studied as part of the economic environmental evaluation.

The TCC, LPA, Statewide Planning Branch and Resource Agencies will jointly recommend projects for Pre-TIP Planning. The MUMPO will be kept informed concerning the results of these studies. Public review will be incorporated as part of the alternatives analysis.

10. Corridor Protection and Special Studies

Each municipality or county responsible for development review will coordinate development decisions with the LRTP to ensure future transportation corridors are preserved. Additionally, as land use and area plans are developed, specific studies of a local transportation network or corridor may be needed to determine the best integration of transportation and land use decisions.

The extent, responsibility, and cost for a corridor or sub-area study, which should be conducted within the work plan of the TCC, would be determined prior to its initiation.

11. Regional or Statewide Planning

Coordinate with state and federal agencies involved in transportation planning activities on the regional, state, and national levels. Examples of such activities include: Functional Reclassification of roads, designation of Urban Area Boundaries, National Highway System coordination, Highway Performance Monitoring System activities, and regional transit coordination.

Involvement could include, but is not limited to: collection and compilation of data; participation in related workshops, conferences, and meetings; and review and administrative approval or endorsement of documentation.

12. Management and Operations

The continuing transportation planning process requires considerable administrative time for attending quarterly committee meetings, preparing agendas and minutes to these meetings, training, preparing quarterly progress reports, documenting expenditures for the various planning work items, and filing for reimbursement of expenditures from the PL fund account and other Federal Funds.

It is also necessary to periodically review and update the Prospectus, Memorandum of Understanding, and other administrative agreements and procedures.

The daily operations require dissemination of planning information to the public or other organizations and coordination with NCDOT and other agencies.

APPENDIX A

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING HISTORY AND STATUS

Charlotte-Mecklenburg has a long history in Urban Transportation Planning. Charlotte was one of the first cities in the country to develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan through a cooperative study with the State Highway Commission that was initiated in 1957 and completed in 1960. The start of that study preceded the State Legislative Mandate for Thoroughfare Planning by two years and the Federal Mandate for Urban Transportation Planning by six years. In 1959, the North Carolina Legislature enacted General Statute § 136-66 which called for the development and mutual adoption of a Thoroughfare Plan by the State Highway Commission and local, municipal governments. One year later, the City of Charlotte and the State Highway Commission adopted the first official Thoroughfare Plan for the Charlotte area.

In 1962, Section 134 of Title 23 (i.e. 1962 Highway Act) was enacted by Congress which required the establishment of a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process in urban areas over 50,000 population as a prerequisite for continued federal funding of highway projects. Regulations promulgated by the then Bureau of Public Road (now the Federal Highway Administration) required State Highway Departments to develop formal working relationships with local jurisdictions to carry out the Transportation Planning Requirements of the 1962 Highway Act. Thus, the first formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) defining a Transportation Planning Process for Charlotte-Mecklenburg was adopted by the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and the State of Highway Commission in June 1965. The 1965 MOU delineated responsibilities for maintaining a continuing planning process and established a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) with the responsibility for general review, guidance, and coordination of the continuing planning process.

The TCC, at their first meeting, recognized the need to update the 1957-1960 study. The TCC was involved in defining methodology and evaluating results at various stages of the process, but the State provided overall technical direction and most of the staff support. A smaller parallel study effort was done by a consultant to develop a transit plan for the region. The late 1960s and early 1970s were spent in a continuing series of data collection efforts, model development, travel forecasting, and testing of alternative plans. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission (CMPC) prepared the data requirements while the State Highway Commission developed mathematical models to convert the socio-economic forecasts prepared by CMPC into estimates of future travel for the region. A series of technical reports followed resulting in a 1977 Thoroughfare Plan.

During that time, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973 was passed which placed an emphasis on planning at the local level, and a revised MOU was approved in 1975. The revised MOU expanded the cooperative planning process to include all municipalities in Mecklenburg County and established a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) of elected representatives from the governing boards. The TAC was given the responsibility for assisting in the development of a coordinated multi-modal transportation capital program for the planning area.

By August of 1976, both the Charlotte City Council and Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners had adopted the 1995 Comprehensive Plan prepared by the CMPC. The Comprehensive Plan included Land Use and Transportation Components, which provided the framework for developing the 1977 Thoroughfare Plan. The 1995 plan called for the development of Metro Service Centers served by an expanded roadway system and a series of busways.

In 1977, the TAC approved the Thoroughfare Plan. The Plan was not presented to the North Carolina Board of Transportation because it had approved an alignment of the Southern Outer Belt, which was contrary to the plan. This one, highly controversial project had revealed the fragility of the Transportation Planning Process and particularly the decision-making structure for transportation in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and brought to surface ambiguities that had crept into the process over the past 20 years.

As a result, a consultant was hired to define an urban based Transportation Planning Process that is tied into the Comprehensive Land Planning Process, and which responds effectively to emerging opportunities and the needs of difficult, technical and community based decision-making situations. The recommendations that came forth focused primarily upon transportation decision making and the structuring of staff support for carrying out the Transportation Planning Process.

To achieve a better process for decision making, the consultant recommended that a new MOU be prepared for Charlotte-Mecklenburg to redefine and update the participation of all local governments and the State in the Transportation Planning Process and to establish the former TAC as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region.

Federal regulations call for “adequate representation” on the MPO of principal elected officials of general purpose local governments. To accomplish this it was also recommended that the restructured MPO give increased voting strength to the City of Charlotte and to the County. In addition it was recommended that voting rights be limited to elected officials representing local governments, but that the CMPC and the State Board of Transportation have non-voting representation on the MPO.

In November 1981, a new MOU was adopted and agreed upon by the cities of Charlotte, Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Pineville, Mathews, Mint Hill, Mecklenburg County, NCDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. The weighted voted agreed upon in the new MOU gave the City of Charlotte six votes, Mecklenburg County two votes, and the smaller towns and the NCDOT one vote each.

The new MOU also reorganized the TCC and set the responsibility for overall coordination of the Transportation Planning Process within the staff of the Planning Commission, specifically through the creation of the position of Transportation Coordinator.

In the 1980s, Federal funding levels, citizen lifestyles, government decisions on land use, and other factors as well, have limited the range of transportation choices for Charlotte-Mecklenburg. In response, the Transportation Action Plan (TAP) was developed to provide officials with the information necessary to make sound transportation decisions for the eighties. The TAP takes in consideration both land use and the transportation system because of their many interrelationships and interdependencies.

Future planning efforts identified by the TAP for completion in the early 1980s included an update of the 1977 Thoroughfare Plan (currently underway), Long-Range Transportation Plan 2005, and a Generalized Land Use Plan Update. This was to be coupled with an ongoing citizen involvement program that provides for review a comment on future transportation planning efforts.

With the release of the 1990 census, the urbanized area grew to include parts of Union County. As a result, a newly defined urban area boundary was drawn adding western Union County including the towns of Weddington, Stallings, Indian Trail, Marvin and Lake Park.

As a result of this change, Stallings, Indian Trail, Weddington and Union County were added as voting members of the TCC. The weighted vote structure was revised to reflect these additions and adopted in a new MOU. The new weighted vote structure gave Charlotte nine votes, Mecklenburg County three votes, the remaining towns and NCDOT one vote for a total of 23 votes. The towns of Marvin and Lake Park also serve on the committee as non-voting members.

The status of the basic transportation planning elements required by the U. S. Department of Transportation is as follows:

A. Provide for consideration of social, economic, and environmental effects

A North Carolina Highway Action Plan that describes the organization to be utilized and the process to be followed in the development of Federal-Aid highway projects from initial planning through design giving consideration to the social, economic, and environmental effects was initially approved in 1973. The transportation planning process described in the Prospectus is consistent with the Action Plan.

B. Coordination with air quality planning

Air quality planning is an integral part of transportation planning. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) is designated the lead planning organization for air quality planning. A subcommittee of the Technical Coordinating Committee did most of the technical analyses and studies leading to the development of the Air Quality Implementation Plan in 1978. Minor revisions are currently being made in the Plan and elements of the plan are being implemented. The transportation planning process described in the Prospectus is consistent with the Air Quality Implementation Plan.

C. Public involvement

Extensive public involvement is provided for in the North Carolina Highway Action Plan, the Air Quality Implementation Plan, and the Prospectus. During the development of the Charlotte area Comprehensive Plan, sixty public meetings and six public hearings were held in the Charlotte area. An important part of these meetings and hearings was a discussion of alternate thoroughfare plans and the transit plan. The 2700 people who attended were informed and encouraged by 400 minutes of radio and television time, newspaper advertising and 100,000 eight-page summaries. A wide spectrum of the public was included ranging from minorities and special interest groups to the general citizenry.

The preparation of the Charlotte Air Quality Implementation Plan also involved considerable public involvement. This included a Chamber of Commerce workshop on air quality, two TCC seminars on air quality, a local public hearing by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), a Science Club workshop on air quality, and an Environmental management Commission State-wide public hearing in Charlotte.

D. Consistent with title VI of the civil Rights Act of 1964

Compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is provided for in the Memorandum of Understanding, the Agreement for Disbursement and Accounting of Section 112 Planning Funds, the North Carolina Highway Action Plan, and the Prospectus.

E. Special efforts to plan public mass transportation facilities for use by elderly and handicapped persons

Goals and programs for improving accessibility for elderly and handicapped were included in the 1978-1982 Transit Development Program for Charlotte and the 1978 CBD Transit/Parking Coordination Study. The recent update of the Transit Development Program for the 1979-1983 period included a specialized transportation action plan for improving accessibility. In accordance with requirements of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration a transit plan to ensure full accessibility for handicapped persons is under development and is to be completed by June 30, 1980.

F. Provide for consideration of energy conservation

One of the specific goals of the Charlotte transportation planning process is to develop and maintain strategies related to energy conservation. Energy conservation will be an important consideration in all decisions relating to the transportation plan.

G. Include consideration of existing private mass transportation services

There are no existing private mass transportation services within the Charlotte urban area serving internal travel. The Charlotte Transit System was purchased by the City of Charlotte from City Coach Lines, Inc. on June 24, 1976.

H. Include an analysis of existing conditions of travel and transportation facilities

Comprehensive inventories of travel were done for 1969 transportation plan reevaluation. These included a comprehensive home interview origin and destination survey (1969-1970), and external cordon origin and destination survey (1967), and an on-board transit survey (1971). Travel forecast models developed from the data were validated on the basis of 1976 data and were used to estimate 1976 travel patterns and air pollutant emissions from transportation sources. Comprehensive traffic counts and inventories of transit usage are done annually as part of surveillance procedures.

Comprehensive inventories of streets, traffic control devices, parking in the CBD, and transit were done as part of the 1969 study. Inventories of parking and other terminal facilities in the CBD were updated in the 1978 CBD Transit/Parking Coordination Study. Inventories of streets and traffic control devices are currently being updated using photo log procedures. Inventories of the transit system are being maintained on a continuing basis as part of the transit development program.

A comprehensive inventory of air pollutant emissions was initially done for 1977 as part of the air quality implementation planning effort.

I. Evaluation of alternative transportation system management improvements

A transportation system management program was prepared in 1976. The 1978 Air Quality Implementation Plan reviewed transportation system management techniques and recommended that the efficiency of the transportation system be maximized through the promotion of public transit, carpooling, traffic flow improvement, and selective highway construction.

J. Projections of economic, demographic, and land use activities, and transportation demands

The 1969 transportation study included the projection of population, employment, and land use to 1995 and evaluation of three alternative land use plans. Based on preliminary analysis of the land use plans, travel forecasts of transit and auto travel were developed for two of the plans and were used for development and testing of alternative transportation plans.

Projections of population, employment, and land use are currently being developed for the design year 2005 in preparation for an update of the travel forecasts.

K. Development of a long range element of the transportation plan

The 1969 study included an evaluation of a large number of alternative thoroughfare plans and long range transit plans on the basis of travel service; area goals; cost; social, environmental, and economic impacts; and public input. The revised thoroughfare plan resulting from the study was approved by the local municipalities and the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) in 1977 and 1978 but was not approved by the Board of Transportation because of differences of opinion over the location of the outer belt road in the southeastern portion of the study area. In 1979, the TAC revised its position on the location of the outer belt road and concurred with the Board's recommendation.

The long range transit plan was approved by the City of Charlotte in 1975.

L. Refinement of the transportation plan through project planning and corridor studies

Project and corridor studies are conducted for projects scheduled in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to verify their feasibility and location. Project, corridor, and subarea studies are also conducted by the Technical Coordinating Committee for proposed projects not in the TIP as a result of urban land development or other planning needs.

M. Surveillance of urban development and transportation and regular program of reappraisal

Items monitored annually as part of the surveillance program include comprehensive traffic volume count, vehicle miles of travel, street system mileage changes, traffic accidents, transit usage, zoning changes, land use changes, dwelling unit changes, population changes, air travel, and air pollutant emissions from transportation sources. Reappraisals of the transportation plan are initiated under the direction of the Technical Coordinating Committee and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Metropolitan Planning Organization depending upon deviations from projected trends and the need for maintaining an approximate 20 year design period.

N. Development of a multi-modal transportation improvement program

A short range five year multi-modal transportation improvement program is prepared annually under the direction of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Metropolitan Planning Organization.

APPENDIX B

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mission

Provide a transportation system that is consistent with the development and growth desired for the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO). The system will deliver safe and efficient movement of people and goods. It will give transportation choices and mobility that enhances the natural and built environments and strengthens the economic prosperity of the region.

Goals

- Provide a safe and efficient transportation system.
- Improve the quality of life for all citizens of the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Area.
- Provide a transportation system that affords the public with mobility choices including walking, bicycling, and rapid transit options.
- Provide a transportation system that is sensitive to and enhances both the natural and human environment.
- Provide equitable transportation options to low income and minority neighborhoods.

Objectives

Streets and Highways

Develop an efficient street and highway network that provides a multidimensional environment capable of meeting the needs of a variety of transportation modes. The environment should be safe and secure to meet the short and long-term needs and aspirations of MUMPO.

- Develop streets and highways in a manner consistent with adopted land use plans. Improve access to city and town centers.
- Enhance individual mobility by improving the connectivity of the existing street network.
- Develop streets and highways in a manner which minimizes travel times and distances.
- Optimize the trip handling capacities of transportation corridors.
- Develop streets and highways that are accessible to multiple modes of transportation.
- Develop visually attractive corridors.
- Minimize accident potential and severity.
- Develop an interconnected system of sidewalks along the street system to accommodate and encourage pedestrian travel.

Public Transportation

Promote a safe, efficient and diverse public transportation system that is accessible to all segments of the population.

- Operate safe and efficient scheduled transit services that minimize travel times and distances.
- Implement land use strategies that maximize the potential for transit coverage and patronage.
- Establish programs and incentives that encourage ridesharing and/or eliminate barriers thereto.
- Serve the elderly and transportation disadvantaged populations with convenient transportation to needed services.
- Increase transit's patronage as a percentage of total trips.
- Maximize transit's coverage area to the extent feasible.
- Facilitate coordination between transportation modes with the establishment of inter-modal facilities.
- Reserve designated rail and transit corridors for future needs.
- Develop land use and density criteria for centers and corridors.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation

Develop a transportation system that complements other modes of transportation and provides greater flexibility. This system should integrate pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation with motor vehicle transportation and encourage the use of walking and bicycling as alternative modes.

- Increase design sensitivity to the needs of bicyclist.
- Improve the transportation system to accommodate pedestrian access along roadways through design and facility standards.
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle safety through public awareness programs.
- Provide important linkages between neighborhoods, employment centers, services, cultural facilities, schools, parks, and business.

Rail and Air Transportation

Maximize rail and air travel and transportation opportunities.

- Improve opportunity for expansion of Charlotte/Douglas International Airport that will increase the attractiveness of the airport as a major cargo mover.
- Maintain the Airport's ongoing long range planning function.
- Promote future opportunities for regional mobility with fixed guideway transit such as light rail or other feasible transportation systems.

The Environment

Develop a transportation system that preserves and enhances the natural and built environments.

- Develop transportation systems and programs that maintain and improve air quality.
- Design transportation facilities that minimize transmission of traffic noise to surrounding properties.
- Design transportation systems and facilities that preserve and complement the area's natural features.
- Plan transportation facilities that protect cultural and historic resources.
- Design attractive transportation systems that reinforce community standards of appearance.
- Plan transportation facilities that minimize neighborhood disruption and related impacts.
- Designate safe routes with minimal urban exposure for the transport of hazardous materials.
- Designate truck routes that minimize exposure to neighborhoods and historic and cultural resources.

Financial

Coordinate all transportation modes to make the most efficient use of limited public resources.

- Minimize implementation and operation costs of transportation projects.
- Develop transportation projects that enhance the local and regional economies.
- Actively explore new sources of revenue.

APPENDIX C

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY

The Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization actively solicits public participation in the Transportation Planning Process. From the consideration of thoroughfare alignment amendments to the formulation of a collector street plan, the MUMPO employs the assistance of its citizens to ensure that the overall transportation system reflects the desires of the public.

The MUMPO adheres to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law. All meetings, either of the TCC or the MPO are open to the public. Additionally, the MPO meetings have a public hearing at the beginning of each regularly scheduled meeting. Items involving major decisions such as the LRTP and the Transportation Improvement Program will have advertised meetings to actively pursue public meetings. Items involving changes to the thoroughfare plan follow the following guidelines.

Statement of Intent

Additions or changes to the thoroughfare plan can significantly impact citizens and neighborhoods. This policy is intended to establish systematic levels of citizen involvement in the thoroughfare planning process that will inform citizens and allow their comments to be appropriately considered. In response to the various possible types of changes to the thoroughfare plan, the number of people affected and how they are affected by proposed changes, this policy establishes varying levels of public involvement.

The Involvement levels

Level 1

Full Notification Public Meetings – Each identifiable property owner directly affected is invited to one or more public meetings to review the proposed plan and comment. Invitations are also sent to neighborhood associations, known local leaders and other citizens who expressed an interest in the alignment. Notice is also provided via newspaper and other similar media, signs advertising the meeting may be placed in the affected areas. Comments are solicited in written (recorded) form for review with adjustments to projects as appropriate.

Used For

- Minor change in proposed thoroughfare location due to special circumstances that affect only a few parcels.

Level 2

General Notification Public Meeting – Invitations are sent to neighborhood associations, known local leaders and other citizens who expressed interest and others who in the judgment of staff are significantly impacted by the project. Notice is also provided via newspaper and other similar media, signs advertising the meeting may be placed in the

affected areas. Comments are solicited in written (recorded) form for review with adjustments to projects as appropriate.

Used For

- Addition of a new thoroughfare alignment to the approved plan.
- Revision of a proposed alignment following the completion of a planning study.
- Addition or deletion of an interchange to an expressway/freeway facility.

Level 3

Specific Notification Meetings – If the change to the thoroughfare affects few citizens, the change may be made without a public meeting. Staff will meet and discuss the change with the affected citizens.

Used For

- Revision of an alignment to reflect the dedication/reservation of right-of-way through the development process.
- Any change affecting only a few citizens.

Level 4

No Meeting

Level 4-A

Some changes require only media notification and/or letters to land development organizations and property owners. Media or other notification will advise what change is being considered and provide a comment period prior to making the change.

Used For

- Upgrade in thoroughfare classification (i.e. major thoroughfare to commercial arterial).

Level 4-B

Some changes require only media notification and/or letters to land development organizations and property owners. Media or other notification will advise that the change has been made.

Used For

- Deletion of a proposed thoroughfare from the plan.
- Downgrade in thoroughfare classification (i.e. major thoroughfare to minor thoroughfare).
- Revision of an alignment to reflect the dedication/reservation of right-of-way through the development process.