

3. GOALS and OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives are not interchangeable. Goals are what we want, objectives are the defined steps needed to reach a goal. Congress included, in Title 23 of the United States Code, planning factors for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to consider when making transportation plans. In 1991, Congress asked MPOs to consider fifteen factors when making transportation plans. Later Congresses changed the number of planning items to seven and then to eight. The eight “planning factors” are goals for the federal long-range transportation planning process. The MPO believes that these goals provide the basis for determining local goals and objectives. The High Point Urban Area also has local goals that guide local transportation decisions.

Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area.

Good transportation is critical to our quality of life. Transportation lets us go to work, shop, go to the doctor, and brings goods and services to us from around the world. *In America, the model for transportation is that government fosters the infrastructure while citizens or businesses provide most of the services or rolling stock.* For example, state and local governments operate roads; contractors build roads and residents own and operate cars.

Improve access to the Piedmont Triad Airport.

It is important for cities and counties that are members of the High Point MPO to be connected to the world. The Piedmont Triad International Airport is our gateway to the world. Although few residents go to the airport regularly many benefit from our proximity to the airport (McPhee, 2006). Just as businesses, industries and warehouses clustered around ports and railheads in earlier eras they need and look for the competitive advantage provided by easy access to airports (Glaser, 2011). For the High Point MPO that means working on four objectives over the next ten to twenty years:

OBJECTIVE: Monitor congestion along NC 68 North (Eastchester Drive),

OBJECTIVE: Reduce bottlenecks along NC 68 North (Eastchester Drive),

OBJECTIVE: Complete the Environmental Document for Johnson Street between Skeet Club Road and I-40 (U-4758), and

OBJECTIVE: Preserve options for widening Sandy Ridge Road to improve airport access from northeast Davidson County.

Improve access to the Interstate Highway System.

Good access to the Interstate Highway system is important for prosperity in today’s economy. The High Point MPO benefits by touching Interstate 40, Interstate 74, and Interstate 85. However, access to these corridors is constrained by distance or congestion. The objectives below are intended to help improve access to the Interstate Highway System

OBJECTIVE: Support completing I—74 in Forsyth County.

OBJECTIVE: Replace the interchange of NC 68 and I-74/US 311 as quickly as possible (U-5169).

OBJECTIVE: Develop a new interchange of Kivett Drive and I-85 as a gateway into High Point.

OBJECTIVE: Support widening I-40 between Greensboro and Winston-Salem to reduce congestion and maintain system reliability.

Collaborate with organizations devoted to maintaining, improving or enhancing regional competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.

OBJECTIVE: Work with Davidson County and Davidson Technical Community College to improve access to their new south campus.

OBJECTIVE: Work with the Piedmont Crescent Partnership to improve transportation in the Piedmont Crescent.

Improve transportation safety.

Reduce the crash rate for MPO Counties to below the state average crash rate.

OBJECTIVE: Annually, report to the Board of Directors comparing the crash rate in the MPO counties with that of North Carolina.

OBJECTIVE: Improve the accident analysis program for the MPO

OBJECTIVE: Include safety as a metric in project selection

Reduce the fatality rate for MPO Counties below the state average fatality rate.

OBJECTIVE: Annually, report to the Board of Directors comparing the fatality rate in the MPO counties with that of North Carolina.

OBJECTIVE: Develop a multi-disciplinary approach to fatality reduction in the MPO service area.

Increase the ability of the transportation system to support homeland security and to safeguard the personal security of users.

Identify parts of the transportation system that, if disrupted would seriously disrupt travel or freight delivery.

Develop contingency plans for minimizing the disruption associated with loss of these links.

Identify cargo links or nodes that could cause significant loss to lives or property in the event of a catastrophic accident or other event.

Increase the accessibility and the mobility of people and freight

Improve access to the Triad's other urban centers.

Eighty-nine percent of the respondents to our goals and objectives survey indicated that we needed better roads to Greensboro and fifty-eight percent of respondents believe we need better transit access to Greensboro.

OBJECTIVE: Support projects that improve access to Greensboro.

OBJECTIVE: Provide additional transit service in the High Point to Jamestown Corridor

OBJECTIVE: Support transit service from downtown High Point to the PART Hub on NC 68.

OBJECTIVE: Support additional transit service in the NC 68, Skeet Club Rd and Wendover Ave corridors.

Improve freight access to plants, warehouses, showrooms, and distribution centers.

OBJECTIVE: Continue working with the logistics industry to ensure that their needs are understood and included in the planning process.

Support improvements to the North Carolina Railroad

The North Carolina Railroad is a key resource for the state and the Triad, providing efficient intermodal service along a crescent from Goldsboro to Charlotte. At one time the railroad industry was declining, but it is resurgent as the freight carriers have focused on their better, more efficient routes.

OBJECTIVE: Support double tracking the Main Line of the NCRR through the Triad.

OBJECTIVE: Support a rail line connecting the two state ports at Wilmington and Morehead City.

Protect and enhance the environment, conserve energy, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and local growth and economic development patterns.

Consider the member land use plans when developing the long-range transportation plan and the transportation improvement program.

Use access management to support land use plans.

Document the efforts made in the planning process to avoid and minimize impacts to the natural and human environment.

Improve the accessibility of nonmotorized users to destinations such as employment centers, hospitals, libraries, parks and schools.

Consider local context in the planning process to integrate transportation facilities into the environment.

Seek energy efficient alternatives.

Support Implementation of NCDOT's Complete Streets Policy.

Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across modes for people and freight.

Add representatives of logistics and manufacturing as stakeholders in the transportation planning process.

Add representatives of private transportation providers as stakeholders in the transportation planning process.

Promote efficient system management and operation.

The MPO continually looks for options to maximize the transportation system through innovative management and operation.

Include projects to update or replace the coordinated signal system in our transportation plan.

Eighty-five percent of the respondents to our goals and objectives survey rated having an up to date signal system as very important or desirable.

OBJECTIVE: Include the scheduled update of the signal management system in current and future long range transportation plans and in Transportation Improvement Programs.

Develop a complete street policy for the MPO.

Continue to work with Hitran and PART to establish new transit service and remove vehicle trips through the utilization of park and ride facilities.

Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

The MPO is committed to preserving the investment that federal, state, and local governments have made in our transportation system over the last century.

OBJECTIVE: Develop an asset condition and management program for the US 29/70 (I-85 Business) Corridor between I-85 and Lexington.

Work with NCDOT to improve pavement condition in the MPO's member counties. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents to our goals and objectives survey rated well maintained roads as very important or desirable.

OBJECTIVE: Support NCDOT's efforts to maintain and improve pavement so that pavements in the MPO service area meet or exceed NCDOT's goals for pavement condition.

Work with NCDOT to replace old or substandard bridges.

Ninety-two percent of the respondents to our goals and objectives survey rated replacing obsolete bridges as very important or desirable.

OBJECTIVE: Include bridge replacement projects in our, biennial, prioritized list of project needs.

Include projects to replace revenue service vehicles and improve passenger amenities in our transportation plan.

OBJECTIVE: Include the scheduled update of the transit rolling stock in current and future long range transportation plans, and as needed in Transportation Improvement Programs.

OBJECTIVE: Include the scheduled replacement of passenger shelters and benches in future long range transportation plans, and as needed in Transportation Improvement Programs.

Include projects to update transit facilities in our transportation plan

OBJECTIVE: Include the scheduled update of transit facilities in future long range transportation plans, and as needed in Transportation Improvement Programs.

Cut the Time Needed to Deliver Projects

Focus on delivering projects that the MPO's Board of Directors (the Transportation Advisory Committee) decides are most important.

OBJECTIVE: Use a prioritization process that accounts for both technical and non-technical criteria.

OBJECTIVE: Use locally available planning funds to move priority projects along in the project development process.

Develop an objective project ranking process to serve as the basis for the MPO's project selection process.

OBJECTIVE: Develop a local project ranking process that uses both user benefits, and decision-maker perception to rank projects.

OBJECTIVE: Any project ranking process should be transparent, documentable, and flexible enough to respond to changing conditions.

Produce planning products that are useful later in the project development process.

OBJECTIVE: Write short project summaries, planning reports and feasibility studies so that it is clear what problem we are trying to solve, what alternatives we have studied, the rationale for the preferred alternative, and the reasons why other alternatives are rejected.

Maintain up-to-date estimates of project costs for projects in the long-range transportation plan.

Use historical revenues to develop estimates of revenues.

Work with others to develop new funding sources.

Improve the effectiveness of the public involvement process.

We need to communicate with our stakeholders as well as comply with regulatory requirements. The MPO believes that if we communicate well then we will have complied with the regulations but that complying with the regulations may not lead us to good communications.

Develop a public involvement plan that covers developing our next long range transportation plan, our next two candidate projects lists and our next two transportation improvement programs.

The technical requirements of transportation planning (*e.g.*, Program development, travel model development, or transportation conformity) can drive transportation planning and to set the list of projects to be built. It is more effective to engage our residents and get them to help us identify transportation issues and solutions.

OBJECTIVE: Convene a panel of public involvement experts to recommend a comprehensive, four year long, public involvement process that integrates public involvement for the long range plan, needs lists, and transportation improvement programs.

OBJECTIVE: Base transportation plans on a strategic estimate of future conditions.

Mainstream Title VI and Environmental Justice

We are committed to serving residents equitably. Because much of our work involves federal money we need to ensure that those we work with are aware that we are trying to be fair and whom to speak with if they believe that we are being unfair.

OBJECTIVE: Include in our public involvement plan the steps we intend to take to involve groups that have been ignored in the past.

OBJECTIVE: Include a Title VI statement in our major reports and documents.

OBJECTIVE: Include in the Public involvement Plan an objective, repeatable process for determining which documents need to be translated into other languages.

Improve public involvement in the provision of public transportation services

OBJECTIVE: Develop citizens' advisory groups for fixed route and paratransit services.

OBJECTIVE: Attend neighborhood association meetings, public fairs, and similar events to provide information and seek public input.

Write short, clear documents that are easy to read.

We will communicate clearly. The MPO's target audience is a typical resident of our region.

OBJECTIVE: Write documents shorter than five pages.

OBJECTIVE: Write documents a high school student can understand.

OBJECTIVE: Avoid using engineer speak, planner speak, or lawyer speak.

OBJECTIVE: Document our sources.

Simplify and improve the tables and figures used to communicate with the public and decision-makers.

Information is only valuable when we understand it (Few, 2009). Over the past twenty years there has been a lot of effort put into developing tables and figures that are clear and easy to understand.

OBJECTIVE: Produce figures and tables the way our minds work.

OBJECTIVE: Avoid information clutter.

OBJECTIVE: Include data context.

Translate documents to other languages or handicapped accessible media based on a formal repeatable method of determining demand.

Improve our understanding of stakeholder goals by performing goals and objectives surveys for specific segments of the stakeholder group.

OBJECTIVE: Include a goals and objectives survey in developing our public involvement plan.

Use stakeholder goals and objectives to inform our transportation planning.

Comply with the open meetings law and the public records law.

Works Cited

David T. Hartgen, P. P. (2011). *Impacts of Transportation Policies on Greenhouse Gases in U.S. Regions*. Los Angeles, CA: The Reason Foundation.

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Glaser, E. L. (2011). *Triumph of the City*. New York: The Penguin Press.

McPhee, J. (2006). Out in the Sort. In J. McPhee, *Uncommon Carriers* (pp. 153-184). New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.