



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN





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APALACHEE REGIONAL RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Many rural communities in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Three area need transportation investments to handle growing populations and economic activities. Others need assistance to maintain their existing transportation system to properly serve a spread-out community and ensure connectivity.

The primary purpose of this effort is to develop a Regional Rural Transportation Plan (RRTP), that aligns with the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), serving the five (5) rural non-MPO counties in the Apalachee Region. The culmination of the project will be the final component to provide complete long-range transportation planning coverage for all 16 counties in District 3.

The RRTP will address goals from the FTP, while considering connectivity in the context of current and future land use, as well as the unique needs of urban and rural areas. Connectivity, including multi-modal linkages that support passenger and freight movement, will ensure a transportation system which is more cost-effective and better able to address natural and manmade disasters.

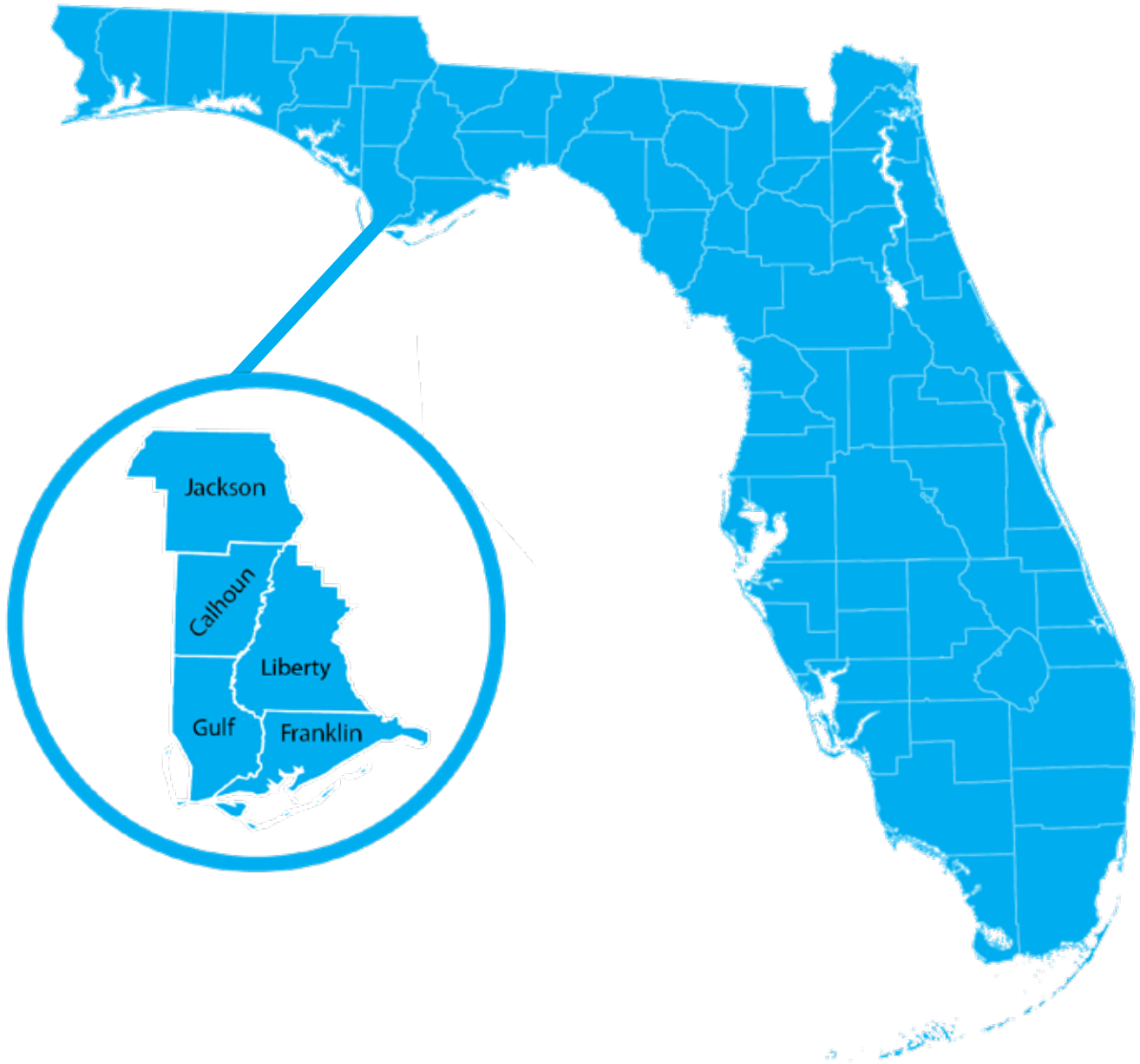
The following documentation provides the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) that will be used as the guide for conducting public outreach in support of the RRTP. It describes the strategies and procedures for stakeholder involvement in the planning process. The plan identifies the stakeholders and how they will be involved in the process. The PIP is designed to gather input from a diverse population within the project area using targeted techniques and provides multiple channels for the public to review and provide input as well as comment on the development of the plan.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

As an extension of staff to FDOT District 3, the Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) has been requested to produce a RRTP for the five (5) counties in the eastern portion of the region where services are not provided by the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA). The geographic extent of the RRTP include the entirety of the following counties:

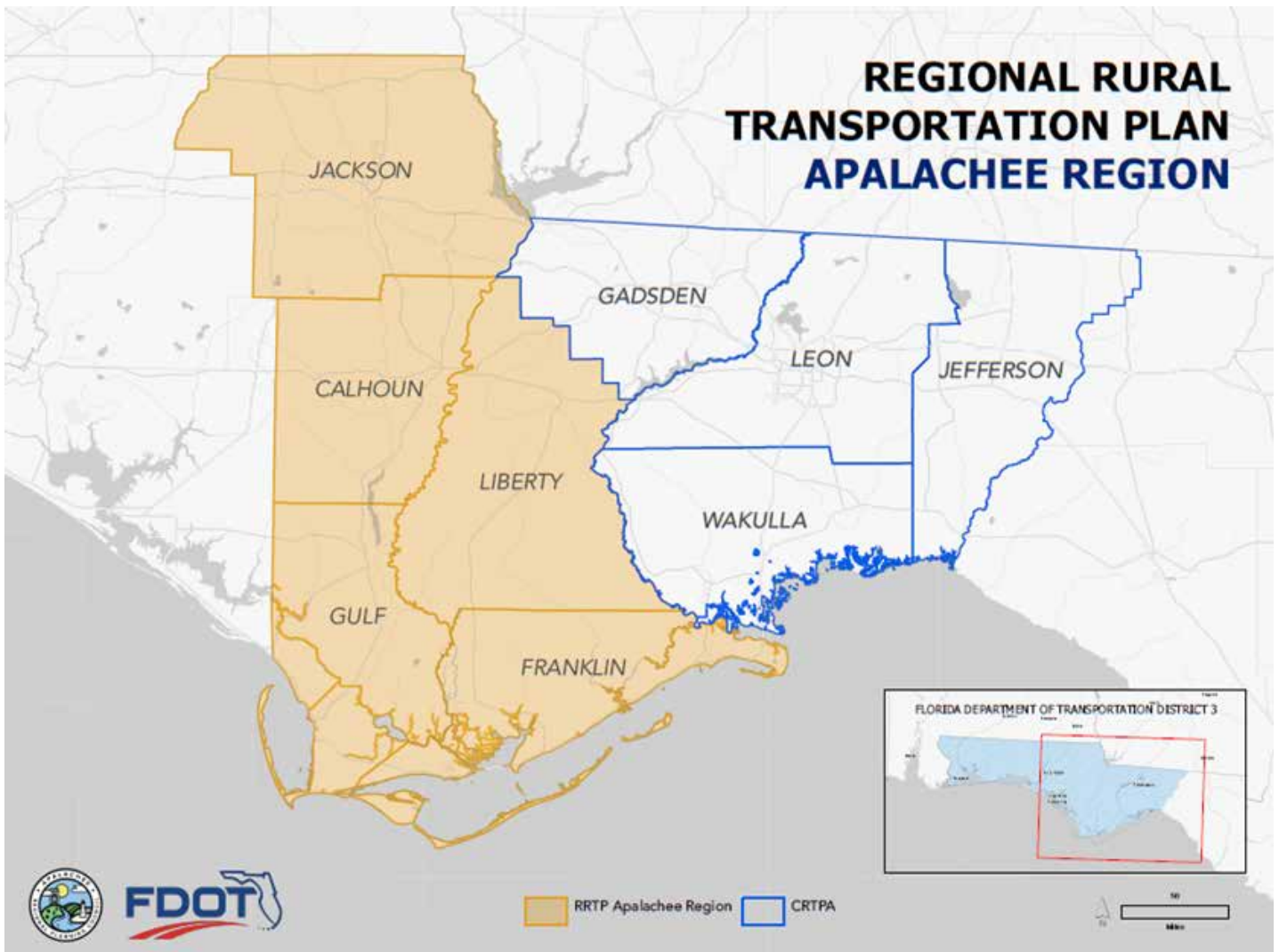
- **CALHOUN COUNTY**
- **FRANKLIN COUNTY**
- **GULF COUNTY**
- **JACKSON COUNTY**
- **LIBERTY COUNTY**





The plan shall use a similar format to the Long-Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) produced for the Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs) and include a Needs Plan List and corresponding map that identifies all proposed improvements and meets the goals of the FTP.

The RRTP will cover a 20-year planning horizon that identifies the needs of the study area and prioritizes projects, both short and long-range, for consideration in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The plan will be consistent, as practicable, with future land use elements and the goals, objectives, and policies of the respective approved local government comprehensive plans. The RRTP will also outline how the projects identified meet the regional vision.



At a minimum, the RRTP will address the main topics outlined in the Florida Planning Emphasis Areas (FPEA) for both 2020 and 2022: Safety, System Connectivity, Equity, Resilience, and Emerging Mobility (Including ACES: Automated / Connected / Electric / Shared-Use Vehicles). FDOT encourages Metropolitan Planning Organizations to address these topics in their planning programs. In an effort to be consistent with the MPO planning process, the RRTP will follow these principles to the extent possible. The emphasis areas are as follows:

SAFETY

Advancing Florida's highest priority: the target of zero fatalities and serious injuries on the transportation system.

EQUITY

Advancing access to opportunity for affordable transportation services and information access options for all ages and abilities and throughout underserved communities.

RESILIENCY

Adapting to changing conditions and preparing for, withstanding, and recovering from disruption.

EMERGING MOBILITY

Transforming the transportation system through automated, connected, electric, and shared (ACES) vehicles as well as other non-traditional vehicles such as on-demand bike and rideshare services, micro-mobility, and courier services.

Also included and carried over from 2020 is the emphasis on system connectivity:

SYSTEM CONNECTIVITY

Identify transportation facilities that function as an integrated transportation system; prioritizing projects that enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.





SCOPE OF WORK

The ARPC will conduct the following scope of work to develop the RRTP:



Task 1: Data Collection and Analysis

The ARPC will review the most current population forecasts, estimates, and trends of the five (5) subject counties. This data collection and analysis effort will include:

- An investigation of the demographic trends that would result in an increase in each county's population size or a change in characteristics
- Review current rural transportation system data including freight movements, commuter routes, non-motorized trails, recreation, and traffic patterns directly impacting the study area
- Review of applicable transportation planning, economic, and land use development documents, data, and programs as they relate to rural development in the Apalachee Region and adjacent jurisdictions

Task 2: Public Involvement Plan

The ARPC will be responsible for the development and implementation of a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) that will be the guide for conducting public outreach in support of the RRTP. The PIP will be designed to provide the following:

- Procedures and strategies for stakeholder involvement in the planning process
- Process for when and how stakeholders will be identified and involved
- Methods for gathering input from a diverse population within the project area using a range of both common and targeted techniques, when necessary
- Coordination with appropriate Tribal governments and federal land management agencies, where applicable
- Opportunities for the public to review and provide input as well as comment on the development of the plan

Task 3: Stakeholder Engagement, Partnership, Education and Outreach

The ARPC is a convener of stakeholders and network of local governments, and ideally situated to foster stakeholder engage-

ment and enhance the partnership between FDOT and the Region's rural local governments. At a minimum, the engagement, partnership, education and outreach will include:

- Development of graphics, visual aids and presentations as needed.
- Expand on any existing public involvement surveys that have been previously established.
- Determine meeting locations and types (in-person, virtual, etc.). These must be appropriately and timely noticed and held at convenient times and accessible locations.
 - o Provide introductory (in-person) workshop presentations of the project to each of the five (5) counties (elected officials and staff).
 - o Provide introductory (in-person) workshop presentations to each municipality (elected officials and staff) and provide instructions for participating and coordinating with the Technical Advisory Committee. When, or if possible, work shops may be combined with more than one municipality for those in close proximity to each other.
- Following the initial round of introductory presentations, conduct a regional kickoff work shop with the representative Technical Advisory Committee.
- Conduct follow-up county-level workshops through the plan development process to assist in project selection (up to 2 in each county).
- Conduct follow-up workshops in the municipalities through the plan development process to assist in project selection (1 round and workshops may be combined with more than one municipality for those in close proximity to each other).
- Conduct a workshop with the Technical Advisory Committee midway through the plan development process to assist in project selection.
- Conduct a final Workshop presenting the adopted RRTP.

Task 4: Regional Rural Transportation Plan (RRTP)

The overall purpose of the project is to develop an RRTP to cover a 20-year planning horizon with the potential for future updates. The RRTP will look at multi-modal improvements like a Long-Range Transportation Plan in urbanized areas by identifying needs and prioritizing those projects for FDOT consideration into the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

Task 5: Map Development

The ARPC will review current rural transportation system data including freight movements, commuter routes, tourist routes, non-motorized trails, recreation, agriculture, forestry, and traffic patterns directly impacting the RRTP.

Through direct input from citizens, county, and municipality input, the ARPC will develop a transportation system corridor-level needs map based on all outreach results as it relates to community travel patterns, freight movements, commuter routes, non-motorized trails, recreation, and traffic patterns linking to surrounding Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) areas. Mapping will be supported and related in an ESRI ArcGIS (or similar) interactive map.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The following graphic conveys the programmed project timeline for public outreach, engagement and reporting.

March-April-May-June: 2023

- Introduce the RRTP program to the ARPC and Boards of County Commissioners
- Develop digital library and base digital mapping
- Draft the Public Involvement Plan

July-August-September: 2023

- Finalize the Public Involvement Plan
- Introduce RRTP program to municipalities
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Selection
- Continued digital mapping

October-November-December: 2023

- Draft Existing Conditions, Trends, Data Collection Summary
- Public Workshops/Outreach
- Revise applicable survey instruments (as needed)
- Kick-off Workshop – TAC

January-February-March: 2024

- Present Existing Conditions, Trends, Data Collection Summary
- Continued Public Workshops/Outreach

April-May-June: 2024

- Begin Draft RRTP
- Continued Public Workshops/Outreach

July-August-September: 2024

- Conclude Public Workshops/Outreach
- Prioritize project list with TAC

October-November-December: 2024

- Present priority list to each county's BOCC
- Finalize RRTP priority rankings with TAC

January-February-March: 2025

- Present and adopt final RRTP
- Develop process for annual update to RRTP

PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

FDOT Central Office and the District Three Planning Office have established the need to authorize a pilot project to provide full coverage for long-range transportation planning for the 16-county region within District Three. There are four (4) established Transportation Planning Organizations (TPO's) for the urbanized areas within District Three. In early 2023, the Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC) completed the initial pilot project commissioned by FDOT to complete an RRTP for their rural areas not covered by their three (3) TPO's.

From March 2023 through March 2025, FDOT has now commissioned the ARPC to complete an RRTP for the five (5) counties not covered by the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA): Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Jackson and Liberty counties. The completion of RRTP will provide full long-range transportation planning coverage to the Apalachee Region and the remainder of District Three. Throughout the course of the project, FDOT will provide direction and appropriate resources for development of the plan.

Apalachee Regional Planning Council & Board of Directors

The Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) serves its citizens and local governments by providing technical assistance and a forum for communication and collaboration to preserve and enhance the economic, natural, and social environments of the Apalachee Region. The ARPC focuses its assistance efforts primarily in the areas of economic development, transportation planning, emergency planning, and quality of life. The Council takes on additional state/local programs and projects as necessary to meet the needs of the Region.

The RRTP will be developed by ARPC staff, comprised of an Executive Director, Deputy Director, Transportation Planning Manager, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Coordinator, staff planners CEO, Transportation Manager, Project Coordinator, Transportation Planners, Communications Coordinator, staff planners, and finance and human resources support. The ARPC Board of Directors shall serve as the decision-making body for the RRTP development process



Interlocal Agreement: Regional Transportation Plan

In February 2022, the counties of Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Jackson and Liberty entered into an Interlocal Agreement for the creation of a Regional Transportation Plan. This project to form a Regional Rural Transportation Plan will fulfill the purpose of the Agreement and shall form the basis for the developing the Technical Advisory Committee.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall be an advisory committee to the ARPC Board of Directors, who will have final decision-making authority for the contents of the RRTP. The purpose of the TAC shall be to review issues of importance related to the Rural Transportation Planning efforts and to make recommendations to the ARPC Board for their consideration. The TAC shall have a maximum of 15 voting members: Two (2) elected or non-elected representatives appointed by each of the five (5) counties for a total of ten (10) county appointees; and an elected or non-elected representative appointed by the ARPC Board to represent the municipalities in each of the five (5) counties for a total of five (5) ARPC appointees.

The ARPC recommends that each county has, as one of their appointees, a designated staff representative with transportation planning duties and considerations as part of their standard day-to-day responsibilities.

The TAC shall elect a Chair and Vice- Chair to oversee the official meetings of the TAC. The terms of the Chair and Vice Chair shall be for one year. A quorum shall be declared if all five (5) counties have at least one representative present, including the Chair and/or Vice-Chair. ARPC staff will serve the role of Secretary.



RRTP PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public involvement process for the RRTP will be carried out based on the guidelines as detailed in FDOT's Public Involvement Handbook (2021), the general procedures utilized by the respective counties that are the subject of the plan, and in accordance with the methods implemented historically by the ARPC. As described in FDOT's Public Involvement Handbook:

Effective public involvement through all phases of the transportation decision-making process is the key to developing an efficient transportation system where projects move forward smoothly. In addition, it leads to transportation improvements that meet community needs and desires, provides for greater acceptance of projects, engenders a sense of community, and enhances agency credibility. Public involvement builds credible and trusting relationships between agencies and with the community. These relationships, in turn, will minimize conflict and help resolve potential problems that may arise when implementing a project. The public is more likely to support and take ownership of a plan or project when given time and opportunity to review information, share ideas and concerns, and observe changes as a result of their input. Participation establishes trust and openness in the decision-making process.



ARPC APPROACH TO PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The ARPC is dedicated to fostering resiliency and enhancing the quality of life within our Region. With a strong focus on collaboration and community engagement, the ARPC serves as a vital resource for our representative counties and their municipalities, businesses, and residents. By facilitating effective communication and cooperation among stakeholders, the ARPC helps shape long-term strategies and policies that promote balanced growth and preservation of natural resources. The ARPC fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing through forums, workshops, and public meetings, allowing diverse perspectives to be heard and incorporated into regional planning initiatives. By encouraging open dialogue and inclusive participation, the ARPC ensures that the needs and aspirations of the Apalachee Region's residents are represented and considered in the decision-making process. The approach to the PIP shall:



- Follow federal, state and local guidelines for public involvement (as applicable)
- Develop a stakeholders list
- Develop a schedule of public participation activities
- Outline avenues for public notices: list media, types, notices, etc.
- Describe outreach methods
- Identify a timeline during the RRTP development when public input will be sought
- Identify how public meetings will be conducted (in person, virtual, multiple locations, etc.)
- Outline opportunities to receive input for those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households.



The public participation schedule shall provide for outreach to citizens, affected public agencies, agencies responsible for natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation, representatives of public transportation employees, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, Chambers of Commerce and/or Economic Development Councils, Bike/Ped communities, and representatives that offer services to disabled communities.

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.210, and identified in FDOT's Public Involvement Handbook, as it pertains to public involvement for statewide and non-metropolitan transportation planning and programming, the primary public involvement objectives include:

- Establish early and continuous public involvement opportunities that provide timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes to stakeholders
- Provide inclusionary practices in activities and notification
- Consideration of the needs of the traditionally underserved
- Collaboration with other agencies, local governments, private sector transportation entities, and non-MPO officials
- Convenient meeting times and locations
- Reasonable access to information
- Timely notice of public involvement activities, including appropriate review and comment periods
- Acknowledgement and consideration of public comments

ARPC will implement the PIP strategies for the RRTP, with assistance, as needed, from the Department. The PIP strategies will include outreach to the elderly, persons with disabilities, minorities and low-income communities and other groups traditionally under-represented in the planning process.





Both federal and state laws, as well as established best practices, require and promote that the transportation planning process include public participation elements rooted in the most recent complete information, timely public notification, project ranking criteria, and total access to the latest available data on projects being considered.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in a workshop or meeting is asked to advise the ARPC at least five (5) days before the workshop/meeting by directly contacting Mr. Ben Chandler at the Apalachee Regional Planning Council, phone (850) 312-3164 or email bchandler@arpc.org. If anyone desiring to participate in a workshop or meeting is either hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice).

The ARPC will maintain public participation opportunities for the RRTP through a wide range of methods, including, but not limited to, Board of County Commission/City Commission/Town Council meetings and workshops, as well as any public workshops and outreach to other requesting regional/community organizations and social media platforms made available.

ARPC staff works diligently to maintain good relationships with members of the local and regional media to raise awareness of public involvement opportunities in all transportation (and other) planning activities.

All scheduled and planned on-location meetings, scheduled through the ARPC, will be held at locations easily accessible by the general public. All public meetings will be sufficiently publicly noticed and promoted through normal local notification channels. When possible, public meetings and workshops will be held at facilities offering free public parking and accessibility to transit and other alternative modes of travel. In addition, all public meetings and workshops will be held in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible venues, when and where available.

In addition, the ARPC will provide opportunities for the public to comment through a variety of channels and will ensure that all publicly noticed meetings are held in compliance with current Sunshine Law.

With adequate notice the ARPC will accommodate citizens who are hearing impaired, visually impaired, of limited English proficiency, or have other special needs, at all public meetings and workshops. To accommodate such needs, the ARPC must be notified in advance within five (5) days of the scheduled workshop/meeting as previously described. Participation in all public involvement meetings, workshops, and other opportunities, is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.



GOALS & METHODS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVMENT & IMPROVING OUTREACH

GOAL 1: IDENTIFY AND REACH THE PUBLIC

To properly develop and maintain an RRTP in the Apalachee Region, all citizens of each of the five (5) subject counties (Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Jackson and Liberty) are stakeholders from whom opportunities for input will be sought. An assessment of the most recent population data available for the 5-county region reports a total population of 87,487 residents (Bureau of Economic & Business Research, Univ. of Florida). The following table identifies the breakdown by county of the population targeted for public outreach:

POPULATION BY COUNTY/MUNICIPALITY APALACHEE RRTP REGION

	04.2022 ESTIMATE	TOTAL CHANGE 2020-2022	04.2020 CENSUS	INMATES	ESTIMATES-INMATES 04.2022	%
CALHOUN	13,740	92	13,648	1,296	12,444	14.2%
ALTHA	498	2	496	0	498	
BLOUNTSTOWN	2,280	14	2,266	0	2,280	
UNINCORPORATED	10,962	76	10,886	1,296	9,666	
FRANKLIN	12,729	278	12,451	957	11,772	13.5%
APALACHICOLA	2,380	39	2,341	0	2,380	
CARRABELLE	2,818	212	2,606	957	1,861	
UNINCORPORATED	7,531	27	7,504	0	7,531	
GULF	15,938	1,746	14,192	1,669	14,269	16.3%
PORT ST. JOE	3,760	403	3,357	0	3,760	
WEWAHITCHKA	2,188	114	2,074	0	2,188	
UNINCORPORATED	9,990	1,229	8,761	1,669	8,321	
JACKSON	48,395	1,076	47,319	5,804	42,591	48.7%
ALFORD	466	-18	484	0	466	
BASCOM	84	-3	87	0	84	
CAMPBELLTON	191	0	191	0	191	
COTTONDALE	852	4	848	0	852	
GRACEVILLE	2,110	-43	2,153	0	2,110	
GRAND RIDGE	892	10	882	0	892	
GREENWOOD	545	6	539	0	545	
JACOB CITY	231	14	217	0	231	
MALONE	1,574	-385	1,959	944	630	
MARIANNA	7,035	790	6,245	1,155	5,880	
SNEADS	1,703	4	1,699	0	1,703	
UNINCORPORATED	32,712	697	32,015	3,705	29,007	
LIBERTY	7,831	-143	7,974	1,410	6,421	7.3%
BRISTOL	945	27	918	0	945	
UNINCORPORATED	6,886	-170	7,056	1,410	5,476	
TOTAL	98,633	3,049	95,584	11,136	87,497	

Source: Bureau of Economic & Business Research, University of Florida



Given that ALL residents of the five (5) counties are stakeholders affected by, or have an interest in, the development of the RRTP, we may consider that they cover a variety of general categories:

RESIDENTS:

The foundation of the region. These are the people who live, work, raise their families, recreate, and exercise their freedoms within the subject regional rural transportation network. They may be affected in a number of ways, such as traffic volumes, safety concerns, accessibility, noise impacts, and alternative travel modes (to name a few).

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS:

There may be other stakeholders who are affected by or have an interest in a transportation project, such as schools, hospitals, or other institutions (educational, cultural, historical, etc.).

BUSINESSES:

Businesses may be affected by a transportation project in a number of ways, such as changes in traffic patterns and accessibility, distance to market, location to major transportation facilities and alternative inter-modal travel options.

COUNTY/LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL DEPARTMENTS:

Governmental decision-making representatives (County Commissioners, City Commissioners, City or Town Council Members, or county/municipal departments may be involved in a project in a number of ways, such as recognizing broader transportation needs/improvements, providing funding, issuing permits, or overseeing the implementation, logistics, and allocation of resources for transportation projects.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

These organizations may represent the interests of specific groups of people or intrinsic community interests.

THE UNDERSERVED:

All residents of the subject area fall into this category. The rural counties in Florida, especially the five (5) rural Panhandle counties that are the subject of this program, are historically and socio-economically underserved as it pertains to transportation improvements for regional accessibility, movement of goods and services, emergency and hurricane evacuation mobility, recreational connectivity, and promoting economic development potential. Staff will work closely with local and county officials to better pinpoint pockets of the population who are most underserved.



GOAL 2: ENGAGE AND INFORM THE PUBLIC

Processes historically implemented by county officials and local municipalities to perform public outreach will be the primary method used to elicit and obtain public input. However, it is recognized that there are many effective tools engaging the public. Some of the most common include:

PUBLIC MEETINGS:

These are traditional methods of public involvement, where the public can come together to learn about a project and provide feedback. Public meetings can be held in person or online. These meetings are publicly noticed in accordance with local and state

SURVEYS:

Surveys are a good way to get feedback from a large number of people. They can be conducted online, by mail, or over the phone. For the purposes of this program, an online platform will be developed.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS:

These are more interactive than public meetings, and they allow the public to work together to develop solutions or recommendations. In most jurisdictions around the region, workshops are generally conducted in an official capacity with the local County Commission or City Commission/Town Council. These workshops are also publicly noticed in accordance with local and state requirements, as applicable. Public workshops will be conducted on both the county and municipal levels.

Techniques and Methods to Engage:

With the targeted audience identified, a variety of methods can be implemented for successful engagement:

- Be clear about the purpose of public involvement: The public should understand why their input is being sought and how it will be used.
- Convenient meeting locations: Provide multiple venue options and means for community involvement. Include possible informal settings, such as community/civic centers and churches.
- Continual education during process: Maintain an educational perspective throughout the public involvement period to ensure community members feel comfortable taking part in participating in the transportation planning process.
- Provide multiple methods for public input: Use of public forums/workshops, use of media, and usage of web-based public participation tools and mapping. This will help empower the community to be involved and provide important data and information on an ongoing basis.
- Use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping: Use of interactive web-based mapping tools will facilitate public input for both workshops and online participation.





- Be inclusive and transparent: Public involvement should be open to all members of the community, regardless of their background or ability. Provide optional means for community involvement including equal access to data and information for all segments of the community. The public should have full access to all relevant information about the program.
- Be respectful: The public should be treated with respect, even if their views are different from those of the project sponsor. This includes being respectful of the local customs, values, and language of different groups.
- Recognize communication barriers: Account for and mitigate barriers to internet access, including economic, geographical, cultural, physical, organization, and educational.
- Continuous engagement and feedback: Providing opportunities for regular engagement and information will ensure that the communities and stakeholders are being heard.

Techniques and Methods to Inform:

Throughout the plan development process, it is important to maximize opportunities for the public to be best informed that they may better participate in the transportation decision-making process.

- Build on existing relationships: Promote the development of the RRTP with local and regional officials and organizations through established relationships. Cross-promotional efforts of programs and projects have been historically vital in maximizing participation.
- Speak at local/regional organizations: Upon request and as opportunities arise, schedule presentation to other interested groups, organizations, and institutions about rural ' transportation planning.
- Multi-media outlets to disseminate information: Information can be disseminated via public presentation, news media outlets, social media platforms, and dedicated website and website links.
- Provide web-based platform to disseminate information: Include a page on the ARPC's website (www.arpc.org) to provide up-to-date information and a platform for the public to email staff with questions or comments. On this platform the following may be provided:
 - o A provision to subscribe to the latest available and reported information
 - o Workshop scheduling, news releases, and identified project listings
 - o Meeting summaries from Technical Advisory Committee meetings
 - o Contact information for direct input
- Provide materials to meet requested needs: Presentation materials and reporting documents can be provided to reflect language and communication preferences upon

request (e.g., Spanish language brochures and surveys; large-print handouts for seniors and others who are visually impaired).

- Develop supplemental surveys: As appropriate, surveys will be developed and administered through public meetings, workshops, requested events, and via web-based postings to elicit additional public input. As a part of this process, all electronically submitted comments will be responded to by the RRTP project team.
- Provide adequate public notice by:
 - Posting all public meetings and workshops on the ARPC's RRTP web-based calendar and other community calendars (where available)
 - Sending news releases via email to local and regional media outlets as well as social media
 - Placing a public notice in other governmental and regional outlets.
 - Upon request, with adequate notice, assistance will be provided to the hearing and visually impaired, those with limited English proficiency, and others requiring specific special assistance.
- Additional public notice: Include provisions in public notices for interested persons to respond by phone or email. In addition, for those who provided email contact information, send email updates to public meeting/workshop participants to solicit further public participation.



GOAL 3: OBTAIN, RECORD AND PROCESS PUBLIC INPUT

In the public involvement process, it is critical to capture the input obtained to use appropriately in project and plan development.

Techniques and Measures for Obtaining Public Input:

Effective and efficient documentation of public input will exhibit the following:

- Ensure that the voices of the public are heard and considered: When public input is documented, it creates a clear record of what the public has said. This can help to ensure that the public's concerns are not overlooked or ignored.
- Improve decision-making: By documenting public input, decision-makers can gain a better understanding of the public's concerns and priorities. This can help them to make more informed and responsive decisions.
- Build public trust: When the public sees that their input is being documented and taken seriously, and communication channels are kept open, it can help to build trust between the public and the decision-makers.

There are many methods for documenting public input. Some of the most common methods include:

- **Written records:** This includes notes taken during public meetings, surveys, and other forms of written communication.
- **Audio/video recordings:** Where and when possible, this includes audio/video recordings of public meetings, workshops, and other events where public input is being gathered.
- **Summary reports:** Written summaries/minutes of the public input received during meetings and workshops.
- **Data visualizations:** For this project, this included project listing and interactive map visualizations.

It is important to note that the method for documenting public input should be transparent and accessible to the public. This means that the public should be able to access all documentation developed over the course of the project. Some additional considerations for documenting public input include:

- **Be clear about the purpose of documentation:** The public should understand why their input is being documented and how it will be used.
- **Be transparent:** The public should have access to all documentation of public input.
- **Be respectful:** The public should be treated with respect, even if their views are different from those of the project sponsor.
- **Be timely:** The public should be kept informed of the progress of the project and how their input is being used.
- **The target audience:** It is important to consider the needs of the target audience when choosing a method for documenting public input. For example, if the target audience is elderly or has disabilities, it may be necessary to provide special accommodations.
- **The resources available:** Documenting public input can be time-consuming and resource-intensive. It is important to have the resources available to document public input effectively.





Techniques and Measures for Improving Public Input:

Continuing efforts to improve public input throughout the course of the project is important to gathering the most and best information available. Some techniques include:

- Identify opportunities to improve and create innovative strategies that will involve more of the population and reach more diverse and underserved populations within each county and the region.
- Conduct internal evaluations to assess the effectiveness of public participation techniques, as needed. Accommodate and implement adjusted strategies as needed to improve outreach results.
- Utilize web-based analytics tools to track and report the performance of online public outreach strategies.
- Continue expansion of regional interagency coordination of public participation activities, particularly when projects may directly involve residents from adjacent counties.
- Continually strive to increase email database of interested parties.
- Take advantage of training opportunities and learn from the experiences of other rural transportation planning organizations (i.e., through the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)).
- Maintain internal records and data of public involvement efforts including:
 - The number of workshop participants
 - Number of respondents to online surveys and/or questionnaires
 - Number and type of any special outreach activities or requested workshops for targeted underserved segments of the region's population
 - The number of outreach documents translated into a non-English language (if needed).



PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING PUBLIC MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS

CONDUCTING PUBLIC MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

Public workshops will be held in each of the 5 counties with their respective Boards of County Commissioners. In addition, public workshops will be held strategically to include the municipalities in each of the 5 counties. The total number of workshops is yet to be determined.

Provide adequate public notice by:

- Posting all public meetings and workshops on the RRTP webpage calendar and community calendars (where available)
- Sending news releases via email to local media and standard local notification channels. Additional media outlets will be included as identified and/or requested
- Sending meeting notices via email to community groups, organizations, and other stakeholders through the interested parties contact list (interested parties may subscribe online at www.arpc.org/RRTP)
- Utilize social media, when appropriate, to promote participation opportunities, workshops, and meetings as appropriate
- Targeted communication with specific communities and organization as needed, and as appropriate
- Tailored activities and presentations to include handouts, maps, surveys, etc.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in a workshop or meeting is asked to advise the ARPC at least five (5) days before the workshop/meeting by directly contacting Mr. Ben Chandler at the Apalachee Regional Planning Council, phone (850) 312-3164 or email bchandler@arpc.org. If anyone desiring to participate in a workshop or meeting is either hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice).

Participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who believe they have been discriminated against on these conditions may file a complaint by calling (850) 312-3164.



Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings will be open to the public.

These meetings will be publicly noticed a minimum of 7 days in advance and will be notified as described in Goal 2. These meetings will be held as centrally-located in the region as possible. There will be a minimum of 4 TAC meetings held within the course of the project and will convene for the following purposes:

TAC Meeting 1: Kick-off Meeting

The purpose of the kickoff meeting with the TAC is to provide an overview of the project and the process as well as the responsibilities of each member's involvement. A Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected among the members.

TAC Meeting 2: Project List Identification and Establish Project Evaluation Criteria

The list of projects developed through the public involvement process will be presented and categorized according to the type of project. The evaluation criteria will also be presented and refined for finalization.

TAC Meeting 3: Project Ranking

Projects will subsequently be ranked according to the evaluation criteria for each project type. The scoring will result in a priority project ranking.

TAC Meeting 4: Draft RRTP Presentation

Based on the project ranking, the draft RRTP will be developed and presented. ARPC staff will accept comments, questions, and recommended revisions from the TAC before finalizing the plan.

Special or emergency meetings may be called if deemed necessary by ARPC Board of Director or Executive Director, FDOT District 3, or by a majority of the voting members of the TAC at a regular meeting. These additional potential meetings should be scheduled to allow a minimum 7-day public notice, whenever possible as these meetings are open to the public.

In the event a seven-days public notice is not possible, at least a 24-hour advance public notice of a special or emergency meeting shall be given to local media services before the time the meeting is held.

Availability of Documentation

Official documentation, as it is developed, will be provided online (www.arpc.org/RRTP). This will include, but will not be limited to, this Public Involvement Plan (PIP), interactive mapping, and an ongoing list of projects (by jurisdiction) as they are identified. The webpage will also include a way for participants to leave comments, questions, recommendations for projects.





PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

