

PROSPECTUS

Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Section I: Introduction

A. Purpose

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an agency established by federal law to assure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. Any urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, containing a population of greater than 50,000 is required to have an MPO. This Prospectus documents the present organization and procedures for the Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

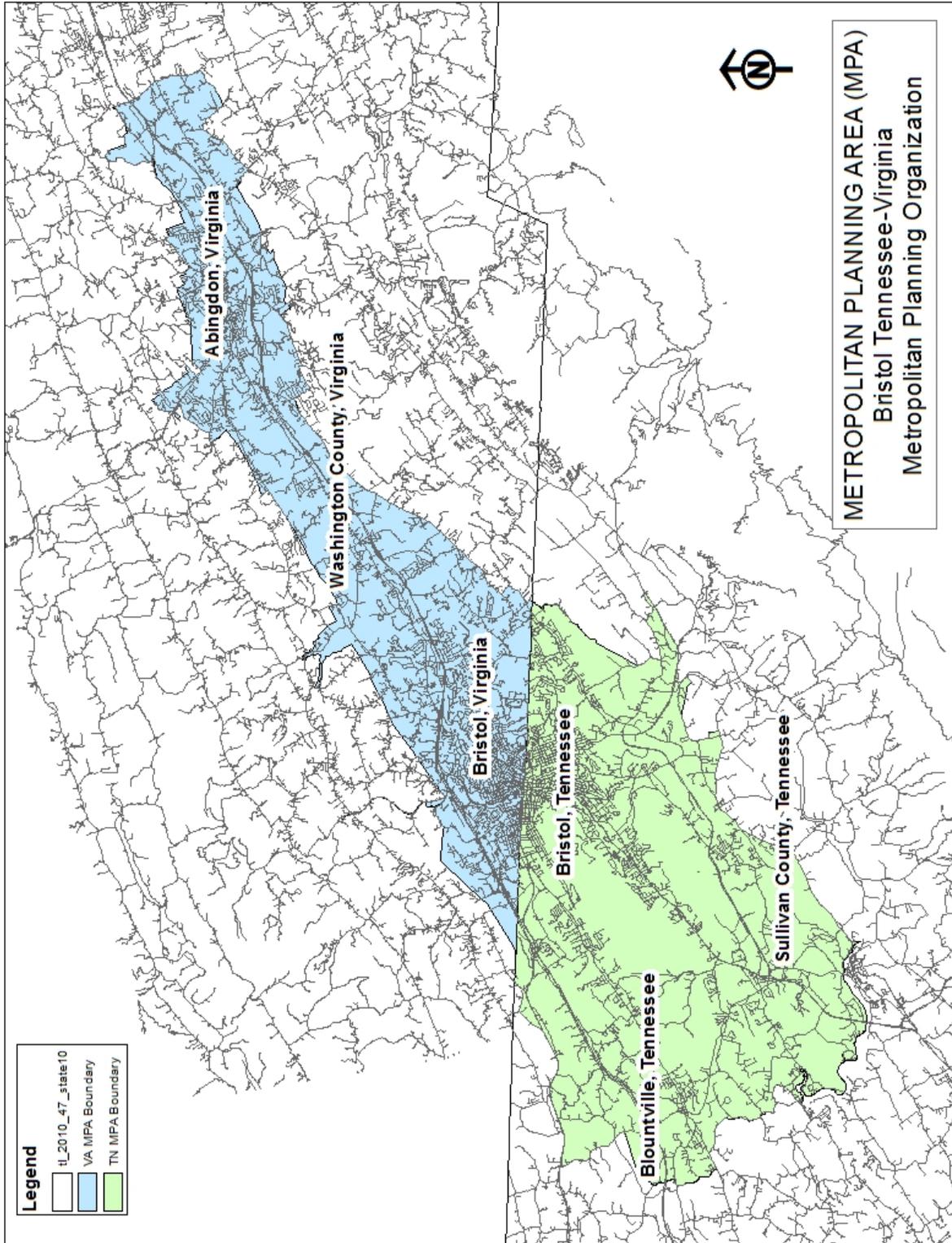
The Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, in cooperation with the State Departments of Transportation and local transit agencies, is responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process in the metropolitan area. Federal funds for transportation projects and programs are channeled through this planning process. The core functions of the MPO includes development and maintenance of a Long-Range Transportation Plan, development of a Transportation Improvement Program to allocate federal funds for selected projects, annual development of the Unified Planning Work Program, and to involve the general public and all interested parties in the planning process.

B. History of the Bristol MPO

Following the 1980 Census of Population, the U. S. Bureau of Census designated Bristol Tennessee-Virginia as an "Urbanized Area". As a result, the area came under the provisions of the Federal Aid Highway Acts and Urban Mass Transportation Acts, which requires a metropolitan transportation planning process. The Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization was established in 1982 under agreement with the governors of the State of Tennessee and Commonwealth of Virginia, and the local governments representing the urbanized area. The MPO initially included Bristol, Tennessee; Bristol, Virginia; and a portion of Sullivan County, Tennessee and Washington County, Virginia. Each successive Census has redefined the urbanized area based on the changes in population characteristics. The Census 2000 urbanized area designation expanded the Bristol MPO to include the Town of Bluff City and the unincorporated area of Piney Flats, Tennessee. The 2010 Census once again expanded the urbanized area to include additional territory in Washington County, Virginia as well as the town of Abingdon, Virginia; however, the Bluff City/Piney Flats areas of Tennessee were designated as part of the Johnson City, Tennessee Urbanized Area.

C. Metropolitan Planning Area

The boundary of the Metropolitan Planning Area covered by the MPO planning process is established by agreement between the Governor(s) and the MPO and, in general, encompasses the entire Census designated urbanized area and the surrounding area projected to be urbanized during a 20-year forecast period. The current Metropolitan Planning Area for the MPO was approved by the Governor of Tennessee on June 16, 2014 and the Governor of Virginia on _____. As identified on the following map, the Metropolitan Planning Area for the Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization includes the jurisdictions of Bristol, Tennessee; Bristol, Virginia; Abingdon, Virginia; and certain surrounding areas of Sullivan County, Tennessee and Washington County, Virginia.



Section II: National Goals and Planning Initiatives

A. National Goals and Performance Management

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) represents the Federal legislation funding surface transportation programs. MAP-21 builds on and refines many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies defined by previous legislation; however, MAP-21 transforms the Federal-aid highway program by refocusing the national transportation goals and improving project decision making through performance-based planning and programming. MAP-21 established following national goals:

- *Safety* – To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- *Infrastructure Condition* – To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
- *Congestion Reduction* – To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.
- *System Reliability* – To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
- *Freight Movement and Economic Vitality* – To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access nation and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
- *Environmental Sustainability* – To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- *Reduced Project Delivery Delays* – To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.

B. Federal Planning Factors

The MAP-21 identifies 8 planning strategies to be considered by the MPO in developing transportation plans and programs:

- 1) Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- 2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- 3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- 4) Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.
- 5) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- 6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- 7) Promote efficient system management and operation.
- 8) Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

C. PLANNING EMPHASIS AREAS

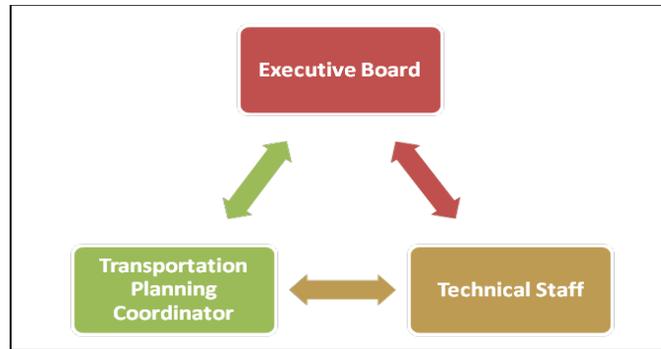
The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly issue Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) on topical areas for MPOs and States to consider in their work programs. These include:

- *MAP-21 Implementation* – Development and implementation of performance based planning and programming.
- *Regional Planning Cooperation* – Where appropriate, promote coordination of transportation plans and programs across State boundaries to ensure a regional approach to transportation planning.
- *Ladders of Opportunity* – As part of the planning process, identify transportation connectivity gaps in access to essential services.
- *Climate change and extreme weather* – Address climate and the impacts of extreme weather in the transportation planning process.
- *Livability* – Incorporate livability principles to improve community quality of life, promote equitable, affordable housing, support existing communities, and support economic vitality.
- *Sustainable* – Promote the functional requirements for development and economic growth while striving to enhance the natural environment.
- *Planning for operations* – Consideration of policies and procedures in the transportation planning process that enable and improve management and operation of transportation systems.
- *Freight planning* – Address all modes of freight in the planning process to strengthen the national freight network and support regional economic development.
- *Planning and environmental streamlining* – Early consideration of environmental, community, and economic goals in transportation planning for integration with the environmental review process.
- *Environmental Justice* – Identify and mitigate adverse environmental and community impacts on minorities and low-income groups as a result of transportation programs and activities.
- *Disaster Preparedness* – Address transportation planning processes that support emergency preparedness and response plans.
- *Public Health* – Reduce the negative health impacts of transportation including air pollution, traffic injuries/deaths, and promote walking and biking as healthy transportation modes.
- *FHWA INVEST (Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Tool)* – Utilization of the web based tool INVEST to evaluate and score the sustainability of planning decisions and programs.

Section III: Organization and Management

A. Organizational Structure

The MPO functions under a committee structure comprised of an Executive Board and Technical Staff. Final responsibility for transportation planning and policy decision-making is vested with the Executive Board. The Technical Staff is comprised of individuals of governments and agencies with technical responsibility for implementation of transportation planning activities. The Transportation Planning Coordinator provides daily administrative functions and coordination of the Metropolitan Planning Organization.



The Executive Board shall adopt By-Laws and Rules governing meeting process and procedure for itself and any committees of the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

B. Executive Board

The Executive Board of the Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization constitutes the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making in the Bristol Tennessee-Virginia Urbanized Area and is composed of the principal elected officials of the governmental jurisdictions. Membership by jurisdiction is as follows:

VOTING MEMBERS (or their appointed representative)

Governor	State of Tennessee
Governor	Commonwealth of Virginia
Mayor	City of Bristol, Tennessee
Mayor	City of Bristol, Virginia
Mayor	Town of Abingdon, Virginia
Mayor	Sullivan County, Tennessee
Chairman	Board of Supervisors, Washington County, Virginia

NON-VOTING MEMBERS (or their appointed representative)

Administrator	FHWA Tennessee Division
Administrator	FHWA Virginia Division
Director	FTA Region IV (Tennessee)
Director	FTA Region III (Virginia)

The responsibilities of the Executive Board include administrative and fiscal control; review and approval of all transportation planning, programming and implementation of projects; and to ensure cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing transportation planning under the provisions of the federal Metropolitan Transportation Planning regulations [Section 134 of Title 23 of U.S. Code (23 U.S.C. 134); Section 5303 of Title 49 of U.S. Code (23 U.S.C. 5303); Part 450 of Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR 450); and Part 613 of Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR 613)]. Executive Board organization and procedures of business are delineated in the *Bylaws of the Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area MPO Executive Board*.

C. Technical Staff

The Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area MPO Technical Staff is composed of representatives of governments and agencies having functional responsibility for transportation planning in the metropolitan area. The Technical Staff primarily consists of planners and engineers of the jurisdictions represented by the Executive Board. The Executive

Board may designate additional Technical Staff as necessary. The following officials, or their designated representative, constitute the Technical Staff membership:

State Agencies	Director, TDOT Long-Range Transportation Planning Office Director, TDOT Multimodal Transportation Resources Office Member-at-Large, TDOT Region 1 Director, TDOT Civil Rights Office Director, VDOT Transportation Mobility Planning Division Director, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation Member-at-Large, VDOT Bristol District Director, VDOT Civil Rights Division
Regional Planning Districts	Director, First Tennessee Development District Director, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission
Transit Agencies	Manager, Abingdon Local Transit System Director, Bristol Tennessee Transit Director, Bristol Virginia Transit Director, District Three Public Transportation Director, NET Trans
Aviation	Manager, Virginia Highlands Airport
Staff Members	Two (2) representative from each of the following agencies: Abingdon, Virginia Bristol, Tennessee Bristol, Virginia Sullivan County, Tennessee Washington County, Virginia
Federal Agencies	FHWA Tennessee Division, Administrator FHWA Virginia Division, Administrator FTA Region IV (Tennessee), Director FTA Region III (Virginia), Director

Under the direction of the Executive Board, the Technical Staff is responsible for carrying out the transportation planning program for the metropolitan area; receiving and reviewing plans, programs, and documents prior to presentation to the Executive Board; and daily administration of transportation activities for the various jurisdictions and agencies comprising the MPO. Technical Staff organization and procedures are outlined in the *Bylaws of the Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area MPO Technical Staff*.

D. Transportation Planning Coordinator

The City of Bristol, Tennessee shall be the local agency designated to be the fiscal and administrative agent for coordination of the Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization. This is accomplished by appointing a staff person as the Transportation Planning Coordinator for the MPO. Under the direction of the Executive Board, the Transportation Planning Coordinator is directly responsible for timely completion of regional transportation analysis; documentation of MPO activities; scheduling meetings; disseminating reports, plans and documents to all

agencies and members of the Technical Staff and Executive Board; complying with request from public and private agencies; preparation of required planning documents; and implementation of the public participation process.

Section IV: Responsibility of Participating Agencies

A. Federal Agencies

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is responsible for administering all Federal highway funds under the provisions of Title 23, United States Code. FHWA issues regulations and guidelines relative to the expenditure of Federal highway funds and monitors, through the State Division Offices, all planning, programming and implementation activities that utilize Federal funds.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is responsible for administering all Federal transit funds pursuant to the provisions of Title 49, United States Code. FTA administers grant allocations for public transportation operations and capital improvements, issues regulations and guidelines for the expenditure of Federal transit funds and monitors public transportation projects.

B. State Agencies

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) , Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), work jointly with the Bristol MPO to establish the administrative and technical procedures required to develop and implement the transportation planning process for the urban area. These agencies prepare contractual agreements as required, attend MPO meetings, distribute Federal and State guidelines and requirements, conduct seminars and work sessions, coordinate FHWA and FTA funds and programs, review and analyze individual transportation planning projects and studies, and undertake general administrative activities.

The State of Tennessee shall be considered the lead state for the overall coordination of the MPO with respect to review, comment, and approval of plans and programs. This determination is made based on a majority of the urbanized area population, as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Census, is within Tennessee.

C. Transit Operators

Bristol Tennessee Transit (BTT) and Bristol Virginia Transit (BVT) are owned and operated by each respective City and managed by each City's Transit Director. The Transit Director for each City is responsible for overseeing daily operations of the transit system, including supervision of drivers and mechanics, repairs, and maintenance. The Bristol MPO staff administers the management of grants for both BVT and BTT, including the application process and maintaining adherence to State and Federal regulations and financial reporting. Additionally, the Bristol MPO is responsible for the FTA Section 5303 transit planning program.

The First Tennessee Human Resource Agency (FTHRA) in northeast Tennessee [operating as N.E.T. Trans] and the District Three Government Cooperative in southwest Virginia provide public transportation for multi-county regions. These agencies receive Federal transit funding for public transportation outside the urbanized area. While these agencies focus on residents that have no other source of transportation for medical and essential trips, there services are available to the general public. In addition to rural transportation, District Three Government Cooperative also

provides public transportation for Abingdon, Virginia on a weekday basis. Abingdon Local Transit (ALT) is operated by the Town of Abingdon and provides a weekend shuttle service.

D. Regional Planning Districts

The First Tennessee Development District (FTDD) in northeast Tennessee and the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC) in southwest Virginia are regional agencies that provide a broad range of planning functions for a multi-county area. These agencies provide comprehensive land use plans, transportation plans, public facility plans, and overall economic development programs for counties and small urban areas.

E. Rural Planning Organizations (RPO)

The First Tennessee Development District (FTDD) and the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC) both receive state funding to establish and support a Rural Planning Organization (RPO). RPOs address transportation planning for rural areas to ensure that areas not represented by a Metropolitan Planning Organization are involved in the state's transportation planning process. The format of Rural Planning Organizations resembles that of the MPO and provides small urban and rural areas a formalized process to participate in transportation decision making and project development.

F. Planning Commissions

Local planning commissions are responsible for the preparation and adoption of long range comprehensive plans for future development. In addition, they provide recommendations to their respective administrations and legislative bodies on land-use issues within the community. They are also responsible for coordinating and developing polices associated with zoning, subdivisions, and the local development processes. Local planning commissions include:

- Town of Abingdon, Virginia Planning Commission
- Bristol, Tennessee Regional Planning Commission
- Bristol, Virginia Planning Commission
- Sullivan County, Tennessee Planning Commission
- Washington County, Virginia Planning Commission

G. Engineering and Public Works Agencies

The following agencies of local governments are responsible for the daily operations of the street and highway system including traffic operations, installation of traffic control devices and signs, and roadway design and construction. They also act as a liaison between TDOT and VDOT, and their respective governments for location, design, and implementation of transportation improvements. Local government engineering and public works agencies include:

- Town of Abingdon, Virginia - Public Services/Construction Division
- Bristol, Tennessee, Public Works Department
- Bristol, Virginia, Public Works Department
- Sullivan County, Tennessee, Highway Department
- (Note-Washington County, Virginia roads are maintained by VDOT)

Section V: Continuing Planning Requirements

The MPO staff, with direction of the Technical Staff, is responsible for performing the administrative tasks required to maintain coordination of the transportation planning process. The following activities represent the scope of the metropolitan planning process.

A. Public Participation Plan

It is the policy of the Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area MPO to take all public comments into account in the development and adoption of plans and programs. The adopted Public Participation Plan (PPP) ensures the public has opportunities for early and continual involvement in the MPO's decision-making process. The public involvement process includes a continuing list of interested parties, establishes a consultation process with federal and state agencies, and outlines specific guidelines for obtaining public input on the Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, and Long-Range Transportation.

B. Title VI and Environmental Justice

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states "No person in the United State shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." As part of the transportation planning process the Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area MPO must address Title VI and Environmental Justice issues to minimize disproportionately adverse effects on minority populations and low-income groups in the development and implementation of transportation projects. The MPO is responsible for reviewing plans and projects to ensure funding, projects, and services are not distributed in a discriminatory way.

C. Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is prepared annually and identifies specific planning tasks to be undertaken by the MPO during the fiscal year. Generally, the UPWP includes a discussion of the planning priorities for the MPO and a description of the work proposed for the next 1-2 year period. The UPWP is compiled by the Transportation Planning Coordinator and includes a detailed description of tasks to be accomplished, who will perform the work, the schedule for completion, and the estimated cost by activity or task, as well as a summary of proposed funding sources. The draft UPWP is reviewed by the Technical Staff and approved by the Executive Board prior to submittal to the FHWA and FTA for final approval.

D. Long-Range Transportation Plan

A major requirement of the MPO is to provide a continuously updated comprehensive transportation plan that will address the long-range transportation needs of the Metropolitan Planning Area. The Long Range Transportation Plan establishes recommended improvements for at least a 20-year planning horizon and includes project priorities and estimated project costs. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least every five years to confirm its validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions. At a minimum, the transportation plan must include:

- The current and projected transportation demand of persons and goods.
- Existing and projected transportation facilities (for all transportation modes).

- A description of the performance measures and targets for assessing the performance of the transportation system. (Subsequent plan updates include a system performance report in reference to obtaining the performance targets).
- Operational and management strategies to improve the existing transportation system and assessment of capital investment to preserve existing transportation facilities.
- Transportation enhancement activities including pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities.
- Project scope and description for all proposed transportation facilities.
- A discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities.
- A financial plan that demonstrates the transportation plan is financially constrained.

During development of the transportation plan, the public and interested parties must be provided early and continuing access to the planning process, including opportunities for public review of the plan prior to adoption by the Executive Board.

E. Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) reflects the investment priorities established by the current long-range transportation plan and documents the cooperatively developed program of projects selected by the Technical Staff to be advanced to implementation during a four-year program period. To the extent practicable, the TIP must link investment priorities to the performance targets identified in the metropolitan transportation plan. Elements of the Transportation Improvement Program include:

- All federally funded projects and regionally significant projects.
- Sufficient description material for each project or project phase that identifies type of work, termini, and length.
- Estimated project costs including the amount of federal funds to be obligated during each program year and the sources of both federal and non-federal funds.
- Identification of the agency responsible for project implementation.
- A financial plan that demonstrates the TIP can be implemented and is financially constrained.
- Consistency with the approved metropolitan transportation plan.

The MPO must provide all interested parties reasonable opportunity for comment on the proposed TIP prior to adoption. The MPO staff coordinates development of the draft TIP, which is ratified by the Executive Board prior to submittal to the FHWA and FTA for final approval.

F. Annual Listing of Federally Obligated Projects

On an annual basis, no later than 90 calendar days following the end of the Federal Fiscal Year, the State DOTs, public transportation providers, and the MPO must cooperatively develop a list of projects (including pedestrian and bicycle facilities) which were obligated federal funds the preceding program year. The project information and the amount of federal obligations is compiled by the MPO staff and published in accordance with the public participation requirements for the TIP.

G. Transit Planning

The Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area MPO is the designated recipient within the urbanized area for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5303 Planning funds. These funds are administered through the Tennessee Department of Transportation Multimodal Resources Division, and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public

Transportation. Transit planning activities for the MPO consists of technical assistance to the local urban transportation agencies, and to a limited extent, the rural transit providers serving the non-urbanized area. Transit providers for the MPO study area include, Bristol Tennessee Transit, Bristol Virginia Transit, Abingdon Local Transit, and Abingdon Public Transit provided by the District Three Government Cooperative. Rural transportation services are provided by The First Tennessee Human Resource Agency (FTHRA) in northeast Tennessee (operating as N.E.T. Trans) and the District Three Government Cooperative in southwest Virginia. In general, the following planning activities are coordinated with the appropriate transit agency:

- Provide documentation to FTA, TDOT, and VDRPT on Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, Title VI, Americans with Disabilities Act, and National Transit Database reporting.
- Provide transit data and projects, including financial information, for inclusion into the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.
- Provide technical assistance and planning support for grant administration functions including implementation of transit asset management plans and public transportation safety programs required by MAP-21.
- Provide continued correspondence and interaction with state DOTs for technical needs and funding programs.

H. Other MPO Responsibilities and Documents

- Identify and maintain MPO compliance with requirements of the existing transportation legislation and subsequent amendments and other federal and state statutes.
- Develop appropriate information and databases for transportation planning purposes (i.e. traffic volumes, physical facilities, crash data, parking facilities, demographic and land use data).
- Support the transportation planning efforts of MPO member jurisdictions, TDOT, VDOT, and VDRPT.
- As needed for project development, conduct special transportation and land use planning studies that have regional significance.

Section VI: Amendment to the Prospectus

This Prospectus may be amended by a majority vote of the MPO Executive Board. Amendments must be presented at an Executive Board meeting for consideration and may be adopted at the next meeting.