



# 20

2.0 Project Coordination



## Project Coordination

### Establishment of Working Group

GUAMPO staff established an Advisory Working Group consisting of stakeholders and technical professionals to provide information and feedback throughout the planning process. The group included representatives from local Planning, Public Works, and Community and Economic Development departments, and played an important role in shaping the organizational direction of the Freight Planning study.

The working group participated in the development of the study's goals and objectives through the project coordination process.

### Goal

To satisfy the SAFETEA-LU requirements by including freight planning in the 2030 GUAMPO Long Range Transportation Plan.

### Objectives

- Identify the Gaston Urban Area's freight network
- Determine the freight impact on existing infrastructure
- Assess the community's perception of freight
- Identify existing transportation projects with freight impact
- Create a freight planning strategy

The objectives were reviewed during the strategy development task to ensure that the recommendations supported the objectives, and then used as qualitative evaluation measures for the study.

### Public Involvement

GUAMPO recognizes that the success of any community improvement initiative is dependent upon a meaningful public outreach effort. Therefore, the GUAMPO Freight Planning process was designed to be responsive to citizen participants. Throughout the planning process, the team was committed to utilizing the knowledge and understanding of the community to address key issues and offered multiple opportunities for engagement at varying levels during the study process.

### Public Participation Plan

To ensure that the public was included in the development of the freight plan, a public participation plan was produced to identify methods for engaging the public throughout the planning process, as well as a time frame within which that engagement was to occur. The plan was updated periodically to reflect scheduling changes and the completion of tasks. Minutes for each public meeting were also included in the plan as they became available. See Appendix A for the entire public participation plan.

## Stakeholder Interviews

One-on-one interviews with stakeholders were conducted to understand the needs of various groups and individuals, as well as which aspects of current plans and regulations for the study area were working and which aspects need modification. The MPO project team identified these organizations and individuals, and encouraged their inclusion and participation at key points throughout the process. Stakeholders interviewed included:

- Members of the Freight Community
- Neighborhood and business leaders
- Members of the real estate community
- City planners and other departmental staff
- City council and/or other elected officials

A majority of the stakeholder interviews were conducted over the telephone, in which the following questions were asked:

1. How does freight impact your organization? (if applicable)
2. What percentage of your company's finances are spent on freight related issues? (if applicable)
3. How does the existing network of roads, train tracks, bridges, etc. work in terms of the flow of freight? Are there any issues with trucks having to take indirect, inconvenient or bad routes? Are trains having to travel on tracks that are falling apart? If so, where does this happen, and what seems to be the problem?
4. What are your major safety issues?
5. How can the Metropolitan Planning Organization assist with any of your issues related to freight?
6. Finally, would you be at all interested in participating on the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization freight taskforce? If so, how involved would you like to be?

The interviews provided the team with information with respect to existing transportation networks and how those networks impact freight operations. Many of the interviewees identified the same, or similar, issues. For example, the interchange at I-85 and US 321 was identified as a major problem by nearly every stakeholder interviewed.

Although the interviewees provided information regarding transportation issues, they were less willing to provide financial information. For a comprehensive set of responses from each stakeholder interviewed, see Appendix B.

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## 3.0 Freight Assessment