

2 ARTS Planning Process

To set the framework for our regional communitywide discussion on regional growth, transportation issues, needs, and program infrastructure investments. ARTS selected ***Transportation Vision 2040*** as the central theme to drive our long range transportation planning and public participation process. Leading the ARTS metropolitan planning process is the Augusta Planning and Development Department (APDD), which serve as the technical MPO transportation planning staff funded by Augusta-Richmond County.

The federal Metropolitan transportation planning regulations requires that the LRTP be updated once every four to five years. The regulations state that “The MPO shall review and update the transportation plan at least every four years in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years in attainment areas.” The ARTS 2035 LRTP was last updated in 2010. This update enables ARTS to gain a better understanding of community needs and priorities, and to plan accordingly.

The Transportation Vision 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will serve as a regional blue print and policy guide for comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing metropolitan transportation planning process throughout the ARTS planning area. The purpose of the LRTP is to identify existing and anticipated transportation problems to devise solutions that are both financially feasible and supportive of regional vision, goals, and objectives. These regional transportation solutions will seek to enhance regional mobility, economic vitality, and livability.

The planning process guiding the development of the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update incorporates a multimodal approach to transportation planning. This includes planning for highways, intermodal and freight movement, public transportation, pedestrian and bike paths. This type of planning focuses on the users of motorized vehicles; in addition to pedestrians, bicyclists and other users of non-motorized transportation modes, such as the elderly, veterans and persons with disabilities. Transportation Vision 2040 sets out the improvements to the transportation system needed over a 20-year horizon for the mobility needs of all users across the region regardless of race, national origin, ethnicity, age, religion, or income.

This strategic planning approach encompass an examination of existing transportation conditions to identify deficiencies and other impediments to safe travel and transport of people goods/freight and services across the region; conducting a data analysis of existing and future socio-economic demographic trends in population, housing, employment, economic growth and location of land development; developing and conducting the regional travel demand model to

gauge existing and future traffic volumes across the system; and as well as conducting a transportation system needs assessment to determine both short and long – term improvements. Finally, the planning process will develop a financial plan to fund recommended transportation improvements proposed in the ARTS planning area.

Other planning considerations addressed through this planning process include land use and transportation linkages, community health, traffic safety and security.

2.1 Guiding Principles

The Transportation Vision 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will serve as a regional blueprint and policy guide for comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing metropolitan transportation planning process throughout the ARTS planning area. The purpose of the LRTP is to identify existing and anticipated transportation problems and to devise solutions that are both financially feasible and supportive of the regional vision, goals, and objectives. These regional transportation solutions will seek to enhance regional mobility, economic vitality and livability. Guiding principles in the development of the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP were founded on:

- MAP-21 National Goals (7 national goals)
- FHWA Planning Factors (8 planning factors)
- Georgia’s Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (4 statewide goals)
- South Carolina’s 2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan (6 statewide goals)
- FHWA Livability Principles (6 livability principles)

Economic Vitality

Support the economic vitality of the ARTS planning area, especially by enabling regional and national competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.

Safety

Increase the safety of the transportation system in the ARTS planning area for motorized and non-motorized users.

Security

Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

Accessibility and Mobility

Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.

Environmental Stewardship

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

Connectivity

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

Operational Efficiency

Promote efficient system management and operation.

System Preservation

Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

2.2 Vision, Goals and Objectives

Recognizing the interconnection of multimodal transportation, land use and economic growth; collectively, citizens, elected officials, public agencies and interest groups, provided valuable input creating a shared vision for a prosperous, safe and healthy future. Therefore, the LRTP study catch phrase “Transportation Vision 2040” defines: what’s possible, what the ARTS may become, and what needs to be done to realize the vision. The shared vision is defined as “sustain regional economic growth through a transportation system that reduces congestion, improves traffic safety; and provides road maintenance, public transit, sidewalks, bike and pedestrian paths; linking that provide access to jobs, education, healthcare, and recreational facilities for all citizens and tourists in ARTS region”.

ARTS transportation goals and objectives contained in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) have also influenced the strategic direction of Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP. Over the years UPWP goals and objectives emphasize safety, multimodalism, mobility, congestion reduction and economic vitality; all of which align with the FHWA planning factors. Goals and objectives enable greater focus on the strategies that need to be developed in order to achieve the desired end state. The seven (7) goals and supporting objectives of the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP are described.

2.2.1.1 Congestion

Develop a multimodal transportation system that promotes strategies to reduce traffic congestion and delay.

Objectives:

- Promote street networks that reduce travel delays and congestion.
- Continue to implement and promote strategies and polices such as system preservation, access management, managed lanes, travel demand management, mass transit, complete streets, and alternative transportation to reduce congestion conditions
- Make the best use of existing transportation facilities by implementing measures that actively manage and integrate systems, improve traffic operations and safety, provide accurate real-time information and reduce the demand for single-occupant motor vehicle travel.

2.2.1.2 Mobility, Accessibility and Connectivity

Develop a multimodal transportation system that promotes strategies that improve mobility and accessibility for motorized and non-motorized users of the transportation network including freight and goods movement.

Objectives:

- Provide a plan which addresses the needs of the local freight industry and the intermodal movement of goods via rail and truck.
- Promote revitalization of the urban core through improved accessibility and connectivity.
- Provide a plan that positions public transportation as a viable alternative to single occupant vehicles, through routing and scheduling changes and other system improvements.
- Provide a plan that addresses the mobility considerations of non-motorized modes such as bicycles and pedestrians.

2.2.1.3 Safety and Security

Develop a multimodal transportation system that increases the security of the transportation system and promotes strategies to reduce traffic crashes and injury outcomes.

- Improve safety for all users of the transportation network including motorized vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians and those with disabilities.
- Improve transportation network security benefitting all users.
- Develop a plan that coordinates safety improvements with planning initiatives.

2.2.1.4 Maintenance, System Preservation and Operational Efficiency

Develop a transportation system that will allow mobility throughout the region by improving the physical condition and maintenance of the transportation network, and provide efficient and safe movement of persons and goods/freight.

Objectives:

- Provide a plan that realizes the importance of maintaining and preserving the existing highway system and facilities.
- Provide a plan that strengthens the maintenance and preservation of existing bridges and facilities.
- Provide public transit service improvements as a viable option to meet daily travel needs.

2.2.1.5 Economic Vitality and Environmental Stewardship

Develop a transportation system that will enhance the economic, social, and environmental fabric of the region through coordinated transportation and planned land use.

Objectives:

- Provide a plan that increases job accessibility through improved transportation systems.
- Provide a plan that strives to minimize disruption or displacement of residential or commercial areas from restructured or new transportation facilities.
- Provide a plan that works to ensure that transportation facilities avoid historic areas and structures, and other environmentally sensitive areas, while providing access when desired.
- Provide a plan to enhance the appearance of transportation facilities whenever possible.
- Provide a plan that reduces mobile emissions and meets air quality standards.
- Provide a plan that promotes strategies to reduce mobile source emissions in an effort to improve air quality.

2.2.1.6 Land Use and Transportation Integration

Promote efficient land use and development patterns to improve safety and economic vitality to meet existing and future multimodal transportation needs.

Objectives:

- Promote orderly development of the region by providing transportation services to those areas where growth is planned.
- Discourage development in conservation or preservation areas by limiting access to those areas.
- Promote redevelopment of the urban fringe through improved accessibility
- Promote the concentration of future employment and other activity centers along existing and planned major travel corridors.
- Protect adequate right-of-ways in newly developing and redeveloping areas for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and roadway facilities.
- Promote new developments that provide efficient, balanced movement of pedestrian, bicyclists, busses and motor vehicles within, to and through the area.
- Preserve and enhance the natural and built environments through context sensitive solutions that exercise flexibility and creativity to shape effective transportation solutions.

2.2.1.7 Financial Feasibility

Develop a transportation system that is financially and politically feasible and has broad support by increasing the safety and security of the transportation system for all users.

Objectives:

- Provide a financially balanced plan based on realistic funding availability and opportunities.
- Provide a plan that works to preserve existing facilities and operate them more efficiently.
- Prepare a plan where total benefits exceed costs.
- Provide a plan that includes public participation from all groups, with special emphasis in reaching environmental justice populations.

2.3 Legislative Mandates

Providing and coordinating alternative transportation options (often initiated by federal legislation) has decreased the demand for fossil fuels and improved overall transportation efficiency. The local region has not been exempt from the effects of these developments. Recently there has been a small incremental shift in transportation focus away from land use patterns driven by the use of the private single-operated vehicles as people seek to live, work and play in close proximity. For example, the rejuvenation and densification of downtown Augusta, GA, and North Augusta, SC, are driven by the establishment of boutique retail stores and multi-family homes, condominiums, lofts etc. Simultaneously, in the ARTS a variety of multimodal transportation options are available; these include: public transit, paratransit, bicycling, multiuse trails and enhanced pedestrian facilities.

Creating an environment for sustained economic growth, efficient resource consumption, modal safety and multimodal transportation planning, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was signed into law on July 6, 2012. Building on the legacy of the previous federal Acts governing surface transportation funding, MAP-21 reinforces the 3-C principles of planning, e.g., cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive. Federal transportation legislation has significantly influenced the transportation planning and policy environment for MPOs decision making.

The MAP-21 national goals are: Safety; Infrastructure Condition; Congestion Reduction; System Reliability; Freight Movement and Economic Vitality; Environmental Sustainability; and Reduced Project Delivery Delays.

- 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 national 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.

Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP seek to address all MAP-21 planning requirements as provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highways Administration (FHWA).

2.3.1 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was signed into law on July 6, 2012. MAP-21 ushered in performance and outcome-based programs that would support the ability of transportation improvements and address identified transportation needs. MAP-21 also strengthened the need for public involvement in the transportation planning process. Indeed, "Each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan."¹

The primary reason for public involvement is to develop a transportation system that meets the needs of the communities it serves. ARTS residents rely on the transportation system to fulfill their travel needs, and by contributing to the transportation system in some way, e.g., through taxes, become direct stakeholders of the regional transportation system. In order for the transportation system to continue to meet current and future needs while enhancing livability and the environment; having direct input into the transportation planning process will result in the development of a transportation system that meets the needs and aspirations of the ARTS community. The ARTS Public Participation Plan sets out the strategies to achieve these efforts.

¹ Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, 2012

2.3.2 Involvement of Federal, State and Local Agencies

ARTS actively engaged federal, state and local agencies in the transportation planning and LRTP review process. Over several months ARTS committee meetings updated members and sought their input and review on the progression of the LRTP update. The progression of the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update through the ARTS committees, including, the Policy Committee (PC), Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Test Network Subcommittee (TNS) are presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2: ARTS Committee Meetings and LRTP Review Process

Date	Committee/s	Agenda Item/Action
Thursday, June 5, 2014	PC	Members informed 2040 LRTP update start date
Thursday, July 10, 2014	PC, TCC & CAC	General Information
Wednesday, August 13, 2014	CAC & TCC	General Information
Thursday, September 4, 2014	PC	Current status of the ARTS LRTP update
Wednesday, December 17, 2014	PC, TCC & CAC	Current Status of the ARTS LRTP update
Wednesday February 11, 2015	PC, TCC & CAC	Current Status of the ARTS LRTP update
		Public Involvement initiatives for LRTP update
		Review and comment LRTP Performance Measures
Wednesday April 29, 2015	CAC	Current Status of the ARTS LRTP update
		Public Involvement initiatives for LRTP update
		Review & comment LRTP Performance Measures
Thursday, March 5, 2015	PC	Transportation Vision 2040 – Regional Travel Model Presentation by GDOT
		Review and adopt the 2040 Regional Travel Model Presentation by GDOT
		Public Involvement – Announcement of Community Meetings
Friday, May 1, 2015	TNS	Review Level of Service (LOS) of existing and future road networks
		Review regional travel demand model
		Identify new projects for Transportation Vision 2040
		Review LRTP 2035 projects
Wednesday, May 13, 2015	TCC	Review & comment Community Meetings Report – Executive Summary
		Review & comment Road Capacity Levels and Potential Projects
		Review and comment Congestion Management System Report – Executive Summary
Thursday, June 4, 2015	PC	Review & comment on draft Community Meetings Report – Executive Summary
		Review & comment on draft Road Capacity Levels and Potential Projects
		Demonstration of ARTS Interactive Project Mapping and Information Tool

Source: ARTS

Since June 2014 ARTS committee members have become aware of the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update process. From that time discussions and presentations have provided a forum for members to review, provide comment and adopt LRTP draft documents. All ARTS committee members have had ample opportunity to become involved in the LRTP delivery and update process.

In the development of the ARTS network models and recommended projects, ARTS staff members have developed two innovative online project review and comment methods.

GoToMeeting

GoToMeeting is an online meeting, desktop sharing, and video conferencing software tool that enable users to meet with other users online in real time. The GoToMeeting tool was used by TNS to review and accept the capacity needs for the 6th Network. TNS members work for various state and local agencies in the ARTS planning area and beyond. Using GoToMeeting allowed members who could not be physically present at the May 1, 2015 meeting to participate in the ‘virtual’ meeting discussions.

Interactive Project Mapping and Information Tool

ARTS together with the City of Augusta GIS Department developed an interactive project mapping and information tool. Users of the online tool can easily identify Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Transportation Investment Act (TIA), or other LRTP projects, in the ARTS planning area. By clicking on a project, a new window opens giving further information about the project such as, estimated cost, project ID, type of project, e.g., widening, etc. The tool also allows the user to submit any comment or concern about a project directly to ARTS. This new tool will enable users to find out more about transportation improvement projects in their community or the ARTS planning area. Public outreach initiatives such as the Interactive Project Mapping and Information Tool will contribute to a greater involvement through discussion and consultation of the public in the transportation planning process.

2.4 Addressing National Planning Factors

Developing a multimodal transportation plan that meets the needs and aspirations of ARTS citizens, Transportation Vision 2040 goals aim to mirror the national planning framework as defined by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (2012). The eight (8) national planning factors² from this framework are presented in *Table 3*. This table illustrates the relationship between the eight (8) MAP-21 planning factors and the five (5) Transportation Vision 2040 goals. Consistency with the Transportation Vision 2040 goals and the MAP-21 planning factors helped guide the development of appropriate strategies and transportation improvements for the ARTS planning area. A selection of strategies and transportation improvements are presented in Table 3 and further discussed later in this plan. Critical success factors identify potential outcomes that confirm the effectiveness of the transportation improvement or strategy. The implementation of proposed strategies and or transportation improvements will contribute to achieving the Transportation Vision 2040 goals while supporting the eight (8) national planning factors.

Table 3: ARTS Goal Matrix

MAP-21 Goal	FHWA Planning Factor	Transportation Vision 2040 Goal	Suggested Transportation Strategy/Improvement*	Evaluation Criteria
Freight Movement and Economic Vitality	Economic Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobility, Accessibility and Connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermodal and Freight Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated freight routes that may lessen travel delay to all roadway users.
Environmental Sustainability	Environmental Protection and Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Vitality and Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context Sensitive Solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing traffic flow and congestion while minimizing impacts on communities and land use.
Reduced Project Delivery Delays	Efficient System Management and Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Feasibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positioning of transportation improvements with greatest positive impacts in Tier #1 of Transportation Improvement Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous implementation of programmed projects achieving Transportation Vision 2040 goals
System Reliability	Transportation System Integration and Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land Use and Transportation Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use and Transportation Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced conflicts between transportation improvements and land use plans.

² 23 CFR 450.206 - Scope of the statewide transportation planning process

Table 3: ARTS Goal Matrix (Continued)

MAP-21 Goal	FHWA Planning Factor	Transportation Vision 2040 Goal	Suggested Transportation Strategy/Improvement*	Evaluation Criteria
Safety	Safety of Transportation System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety and Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Streets Age-Friendly Design Traffic Calming Capital investments in roadway safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safer places to walk, ride and cross roadways (for all age cohorts), improves safety and decreases pedestrian/bicycle related crashes
Infrastructure Condition	System Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate resources for Roadway Maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of maintenance funds permitting programmed maintenance regimen to be sustained
Congestion Reduction	Increased Access and Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congestion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geometric, Widening or Capacity Improvement Public Transit & Paratransit Service Expansion Access Management High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Congestion Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained reductions in roadway or intersection Level of Service post capacity improvements Increasing use of Public Transit and non-motorized transportation alternatives Increased use of High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
System Reliability	Security of Transportation System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety and Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridge Repair and Upgrade Evolving Transportation Security Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreasing numbers of bridges classified in critical condition Availability of funds permitting bridge maintenance and upgrade regimen to be sustained

* Presented in later sections of the LRTP

Source: ARTS

2.5 Public Participation

The ARTS MPO recognizes that continuous and active public participation by the entire region, in addition to the ARTS’s Policy, Technical Coordinating, Test Network, Citizens Advisory Committee members, is paramount to good transportation planning. Public comments are valued because they shape the direction of a particular transportation study or planning activity, and may help to identify existing transportation deficiencies, travel needs, innovative strategies, and solutions to define new transportation projects that are important to citizens of the region. Additionally, ARTS relies on the Transit Citizens Advisory Committee (TCAC) for the Augusta Public Transit Department to assist with public outreach and engagement efforts on the LRTP and TIP. The Augusta-Richmond County Commission appoints the 10-member committee, which represent each district within the county. The TCAC has been very instrumental in increasing public participation during the LRTP planning process.

For ARTS transportation planning activities, the current Public Participation Plan sets the framework for the public involvement opportunities that will be available throughout the course of the LRTP planning process. This process is further explained in detail in the “Public Participation section of this plan.

2.5.1 Public Participation Process and Goal Setting

Developing and refining the Transportation Vision 2040 goals involved extensive public outreach and involvement. The goal setting process involved public input gained from community meetings, Speaker Bureaus, one-on-one discussions with various individuals, and online surveys. Overall, more than 1,000 persons provided direct and indirect input into the goal setting process. Goal setting methodology and outcomes are discussed in greater detail in section 5.8 of this plan.